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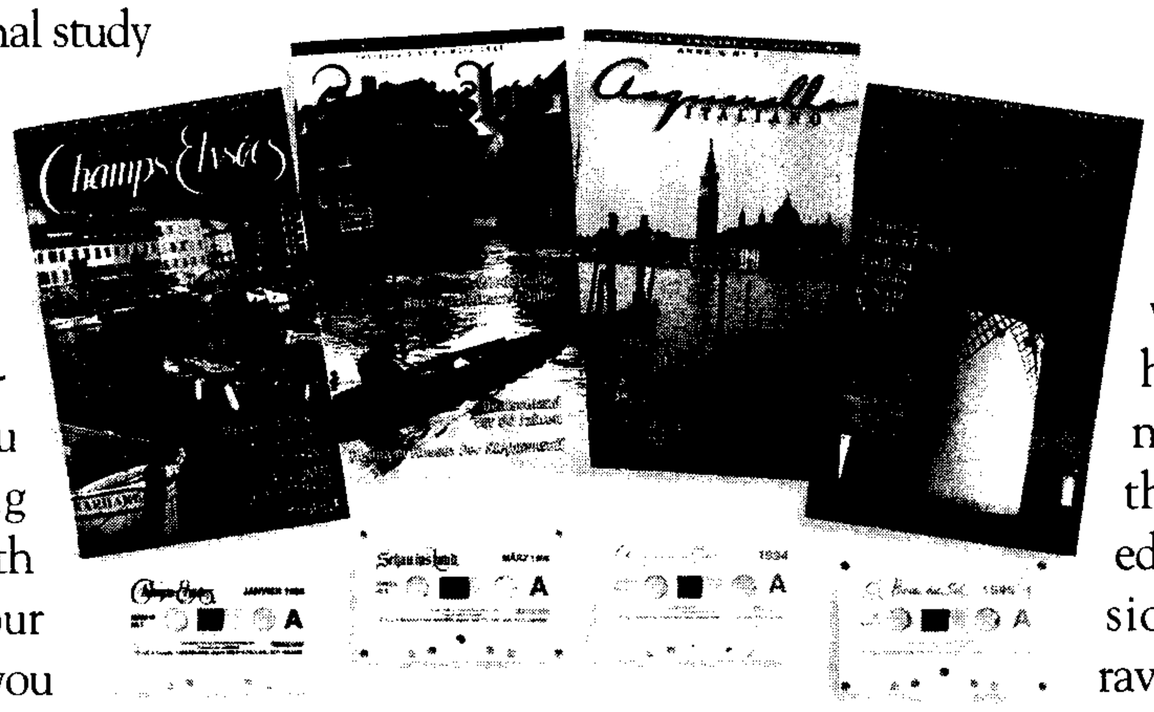
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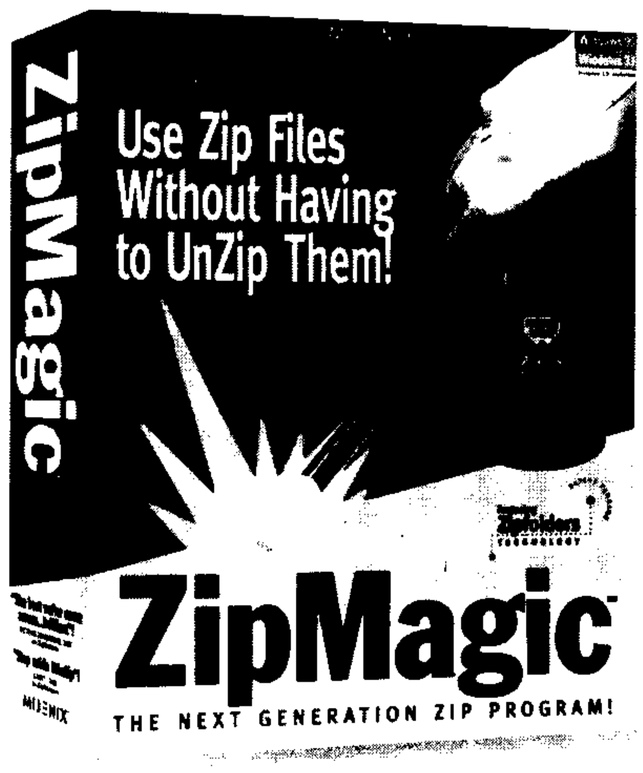

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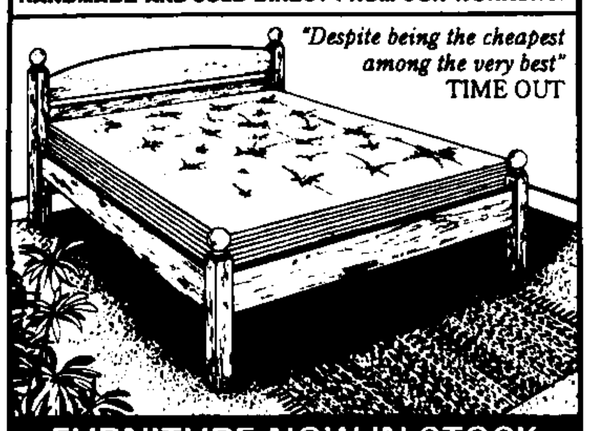

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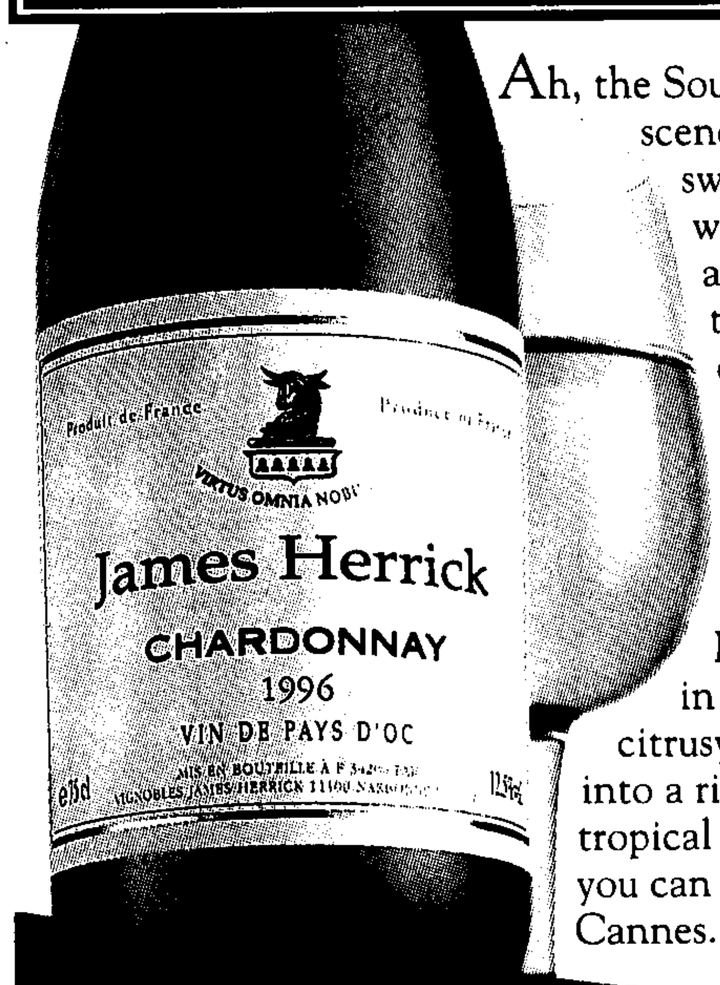

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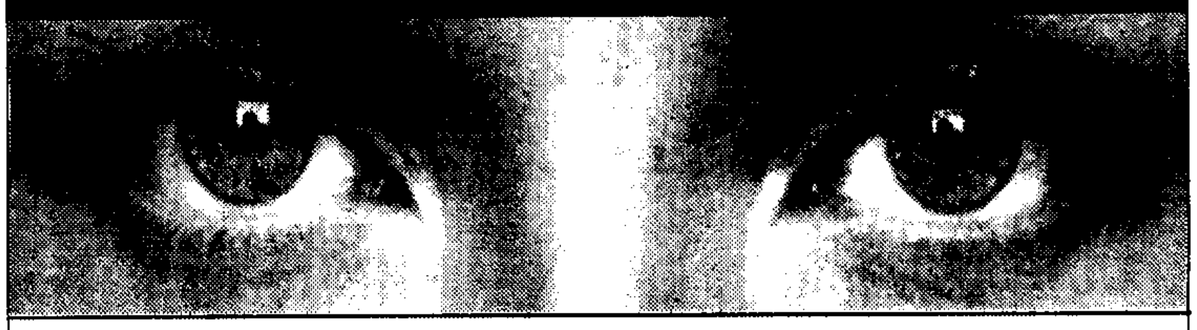

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I hope this will be the end of the matter, and if it is not, anyone making further allegations concerning any of the above will find themselves in receipt of a writ from my lawyers Messrs Sue, Grabbit and Ruck (Mr Carter-Ruck having recently become a partner following the sad demise of Sir Oscar Runne).

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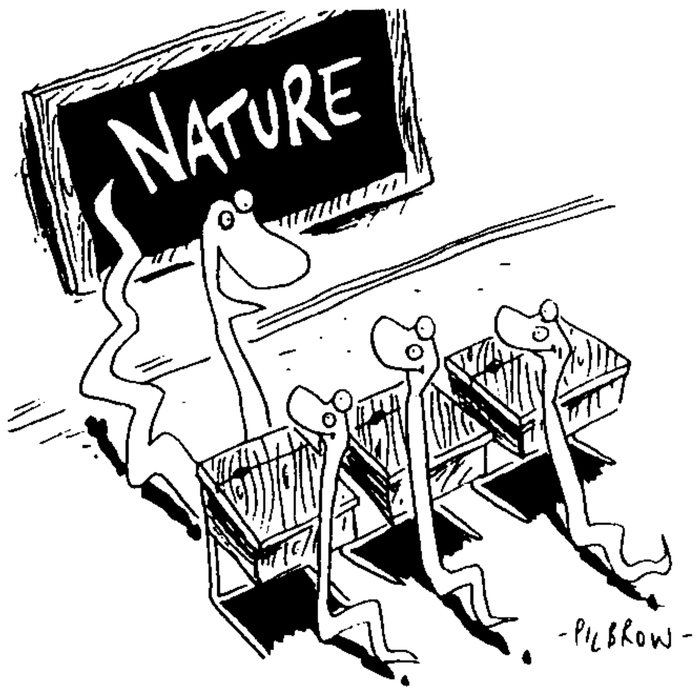

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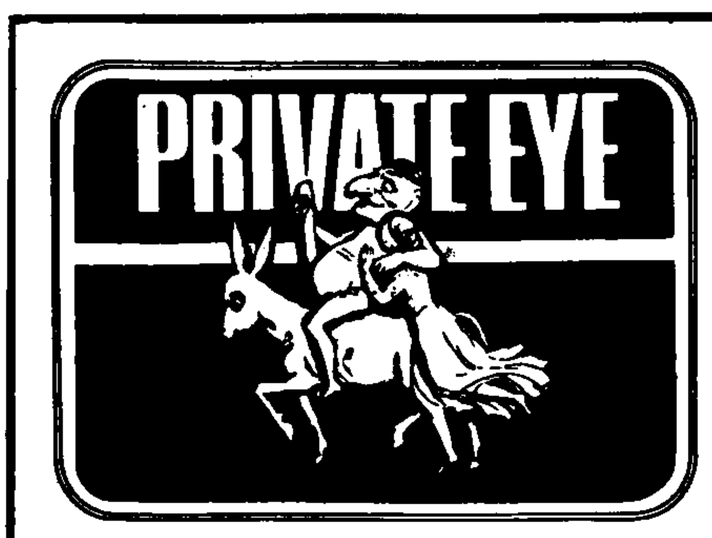

COLOUR SECTION

WAS the discovery of Robin Cook's extra-marital fling a cock-up (*sic*) — or conspiracy?

Definitely the former, according to Fleet Street. "The exposure of Mr Cook's affair began when freelance photographer Andy Tyndall by chance saw him walking down the street with a bag of rubbish soon after the election," the *Daily Mail* reported on Monday, "and thought it would make an amusing picture." It was only on the evening of 25 July that Tyndall and a colleague began their systematic stake-out of the foreign secretary.

How odd, then, that at lunchtime on 25 July a sudden spate of messages started arriving at the *Eye*, helpfully listing the Pimlico address occupied by Cook and "the gorgeous pouting/willing Gaynor Regan". They included details of Cook's travel plans and his conversations with civil servants, and a complaint that Cook "objects strongly to the FO's fixation with him having to meet ambassadors all the time".

There was also a suggestion that Cook wanted to move Gaynor Regan from his room at the House of Commons into his private office at the FO. "Robin has been advised (very gently) by the FO that Gaynor would fail the security check," the message claimed, since the "standard vetting procedures have turned up, under routine investigation of her flat [*address given*], an intimate relationship with... the straight-laced presbyterian foreign secretary himself."

This material did not come from a freelance photographer in Pimlico. It emanated, indirectly, from sources at the foreign office itself. Peeved by Cook's uninterest in the more formal and ceremonial part of his duties, and by his attempt to install his mistress at the FO, they had deliberately passed the story on to certain people at Westminster in the hope that it would leak — as it duly did.

PS: On his first day at the foreign office, Robin Cook had a congratulatory telephone call from Madeline Albright, the American secretary of state. "Perhaps," he told an aide, "on reflection, I should have had someone listening in."

"Don't worry, minister," the aide replied, "two of us were."

LORD PARKINSON, Tory party chairman, leaps into the fray over the shareholdings of Lord Simon, the new Labour competition minister at the department of trade.

He is understandably shocked at the prime minister's absurd threat to use government money to sue Simon's critics for libel. Parkinson told the BBC's *Today* programme on 1 August: "It is a very, very sad day for democracy and politics if you have to start threatening people who raise legitimate questions with action in the courts."

Whoops! Parkinson might have cited in defence of that proposition a Channel Four programme in November 1989 on the strange case of the trade minister who introduced new laws against insider dealing — and whose stockbroker Walter Walker, without Parkinson knowing, engaged in alleged insider share deals. Of special interest in the programme were dealings in the name of Ferlim Nominees, account P36.

As soon as the minister heard about the programme, he rushed to the celebrated libel lawyers, Peter Carter-Fuck and Partners, who deluged the production company and Channel Four with letters threatening legal action if the programme dared suggest for a single moment that the minister had in the slightest degree fallen short of the accepted practice for ministers holding shares. The threats culminated in a front-page headline in the *Evening Standard* proclaiming the minister's promise: "I WILL SUE".

It was, in short, a very, very sad day for democracy, but it was soon over. The programme duly went out under the mysterious title AT THE MERCY OF THE UNSCRUPULOUS. Eight years later the production company and Channel Four are still waiting for the minister's writ. The name of the minister and the beneficial owner of account P36 of Ferlim Nominees must by now be obvious: The Rt Hon Cecil Parkinson, now duly ennobled.

THE hype is over for BT and its proposed merger with US telecoms giant MCI. Punters inside and outside BT are openly advocating that after MCI's recent profits warning, BT should back away from the merger altogether.

However, BT's chairman Sir Iain Vallance and chief executive Sir Peter Bondfield are still firmly in favour of the merger, which they believe will be in the best interests of everyone concerned.

One important aspect of the merger is something called the "global equity incentive portfolio" — a share options scheme. The only UK executive to benefit from the scheme is Sir Peter Bondfield, who stands to make at least £3m from it. A recent report from PIRC, the pensions and investment research consortium, roundly criticised the new scheme for providing "multiple layers of reward" without any financial commitment by participants and "therefore no downside risk".

Chairman Sir Iain Vallance recently stepped down as chief executive and so can't take part in this bonanza. He was also excluded from last year's annual bonus scheme. By way of compensation for this, Sir Iain gets "a discretionary bonus" of half a million quid. Moreover, because of "the significant changes in his responsibilities following the merger with MCI", he is being allowed back into the bonus scheme up to a maximum of 100 percent of his salary (another half million). The generous dispenser of this largesse is the chairman of the remuneration committee, Sir Colin Marshall, who is also a director of MCI.

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*"Usually the sex **stops** when the honeymoon is over"*

NEWS

RETIRED judge Gerald Butler is carrying out an inquiry for Dame Barbara Mills, the director of public prosecutions, into why the crown prosecution service (CPS) did not prosecute the police involved in the deaths of Shiji Lapite and Richard O'Brien and the torture of Derek Treadaway?

Top of Butler's list to give vital interviews is David Kyle, the former head of crown prosecutions at the CPS who recommended Dame Barbara take no action in the Lapite and O'Brien cases.

PS: Mr Kyle can be contacted at his new place of work: the criminal cases review commission, where he decides whether alleged cases of injustice should be reopened or not.

AT enormous expense, Nottinghamshire county council has spent much of this summer trying to suppress an embarrassing official document — known as the JET report — on the "satanic abuse" fiasco.

Having already won an injunction against three hacks who posted the report on the internet, and tried to bully other netheads who copied it, the Notts lawyers were due at the high court next month to pursue their case. But last week the council suddenly withdrew from the fray and agreed to rescind the injunction — thus effectively admitting that its campaign of intimidation and censorship was legally insupportable.

This will be distressing news for Beatrix Campbell, the left-wing hackette who has been Nottinghamshire's most energetic supporter. Only last month, in a letter to the *Eye*, she claimed that the JET report had been "discredited".

How creditworthy is Campbell herself? "It was a judge — not social workers or carers — who described the abuse as 'satanic'," she insisted in *Eye* 928, dismissing our coverage as "wrong, wrong, wrong". Yet in the magazine *Community Care* on 30 March 1989, Nottingham social-work team leaders Judith Dawson and Christine Johnston described the abuse as "fodder for the gratification of those interested not in sex itself but in its use as a tool for the promotion of acts which could only be described as satanic".

It is surprising Bea Campbell should be unaware of this: Judith Dawson has for some years been her live-in lover.

ONE of the stronger bidders for cash from the New Millennium Experience's funds is the National Life Story Collection, a charity which aims to "advance public education by the establishment of a national biography in sound consisting of a national collection of autobiographical and other life story records".

However, the *Eye* has heard rumours of unpleasant internal strife at the charity where a member of the administrative staff has been sacked after irregularities were discovered.

The NLSC told the *Eye* bluntly that these irregularities involved "unauthorised cheque payments". Had the charity commission been informed of the matter? "Yes." The *Eye* asked if the lottery board had been informed of the situation. The charity's reply was not quite so succinct: "The NLSC is one of four partners in a consortium which has bid for a grant from the New Millennium Experience, with whom we are still in discussion."

"He's not good at flying!"

Street Of Shame

CHIEF executives of major companies are popping in and out of the *Financial Times* office all the time — and more and more of them are having to stifle their sniggers as they witness the Strategy Tree — a bizarre posterboard that is prominently displayed throughout the building.

Modelled on Birtspeak, this huge wallchart is an incomprehensible assemblage of arrows and little boxes embellished with random buzz-phrases — "Delight our readers worldwide", "Continuously develop our products", "Right first time", "Innovate and embrace change" and so forth.

This is the latest crackpot scheme of the *FT*'s chief executive Stephen "Slasher" Hill, the boyish, leather-fancying monster who is rapidly destroying what credibility the paper has left. Slasher — who, like William Hague, learned his management consultancy skills at McKinsey — appears to think that gobbledegook of this kind is inspirational. Staff fear that it cannot be long before he drags them all off on paintball weekends.

While Hill fiddles, all around him burns. The latest of many hacks to depart is the only one who regularly got scoops: after 20 years at the paper, media correspondent Ray Snoddy is leaving on 19 August to join the *Times* for a six-figure salary, having apparently lost patience with the cowardly ways of editor Richard "Safe Hands" Lambert and the yes-men who surround him. More are set to follow.

The City's verdict on all this is embarrassingly clear. In one of the biggest, longest bull-runs on the stock market for years, the only FTSE 100 share price to slump has been... Pearson, parent company of the *FT*.

But "Safe Hands" — now spending a year in the US spearheading a crazy £150m scheme to increase the *FT*'s pisspoor circulation there of 25,000 copies a day — will clearly achieve what has become his dominating passion — a knighthood. Indeed, if he didn't get one pretty soon it would be something of a scandal since all previous *FT* editors have been so honoured.

His chances certainly won't have been harmed by his recent employment of Andrew Balls, scarcely out of nappies, as a leader writer. Andrew is the younger brother of the rather more famous (and influential) Ed Balls — who just happens to be senior policy adviser to Gordon Brown.

A BATTLE of the political lunches is being waged at the *Sunday Times* between the paper's rival political hacks.

Hostilities started when Sebastian Hamilton was made Westminster correspondent after writing a crawling letter to editor John Witherow. He got the job even though his youthful arrogance and lack of tact has raised hackles in every department he has worked in since joining the paper as a graduate trainee.

His brief from Witherow is clear: to get as much dirt as he can on Labour MPs. Meanwhile Witherow wants to keep his politics department (Andrew Grice and Michael Prescott) as Labour-friendly as possible to keep the government-sourced stories coming in. But his attempt to have his political cake and eat it may be ruined by the pathological hatred between the two sides who are spending more time doggedly shadowing each other than their political subjects

TRACEY EMIN, bimbo "artist" and performance quilt person, told Miranda Sawyer, the *Observer*'s bimbo "interviewer", that as a girl in Margate she once killed a school dinner lady by throwing a medicine ball at her. "I was happy about that, yeah," she said.

Later inquiries to Emin about how she got away with murder for so long drew a blank, however. Suddenly shy, she did not return her calls. Her fans must hope she wasn't making up the story to make herself sound more interesting. After all, it's only philistine journos who are supposed to make things up...

CONGRATULATIONS to David "Rommel" Montgomery and his bid to raise journalistic standards: from September, *Mirror* and *Independent* hacks will retrain at a "Newspaper Academy of Excellence" he has set up in Canary Wharf.

Rommel is well qualified to promote excellence. His first job as a casual downtable sub at the *Mirror*'s Manchester office in the 70s ended abruptly when he was caught doctoring copy from Belfast to give it a pro-Unionist "spin".

He later worked for the integrity-rich *Sun* and *News of the Screws*, which led to his commitment to excellence being officially recognised in a newspaper editorial in 1989 (in the *Mirror*) that described him as "a liar, a thief, a hypocrite, a bigot and a pornographer".

It is perhaps because of this latter description that staff at Midland Independent Newspapers — the subject of a £297m takeover by Montgomery's Mirror Group — have been dreading a visit from their new chief executive and would-be media magnate.

The picture desk was first to hear that Rommel intended to call at the *Birmingham Post* while surveying his empire. Astonishingly, it was ordered to send photographers out on to the M6 to take pictures of the junction at which the great man should leave the motorway on his drive up from London. The snappers were also told to photograph landmarks, like the RAC control centre, to help Montgomery on his way. City centre signposts were also pictured, as was the front of the papers' offices in Colmore Circus to make absolutely sure the great man couldn't get lost.

BRIAN WHITAKER, managing editor of the *Guardian*, is determined to establish a reputation as a Montgomery-style "hard boss". So for his latest assault he has singled out the weakest of the *Guardian*'s writers: its freelances.

They have been circulated with a pro forma letter demanding that the copyright of all articles published in the *Guardian* be surrendered to the *Guardian*. The writers are warned that if they refuse to assign the copyright in this way, it will probably not be published.

This bizarre behaviour has been greeted with profound fury by the writers, most of whom are too fearful to complain. One woman who insisted she keep her own copyright and organise her own syndication was surprised to get a letter from Whitaker telling her he had instructed her commissioning editor never to commission work from her again.

Some impertinent freelances have noted that Whitaker is directing his attack on writers who are less well-known and therefore less able to take their work elsewhere. Whitaker is said to have met this attack with an unusual response. "I haven't gone for the famous, but the not-so-famous can get lost."

HAS Frank Johnson, the impish editor of the *Spectator*, lost his nerve?

It seems so. After the collapse of the Jonathan Aitken trial, Johnson warned *Grauniad* editor Alan Rusbridger that Paul "Loonybins" Johnson would be attacking him vigorously in the *Spectacularlyboring* — but that Rubbisher would be more than welcome to write a reply whenever he liked.

Since then, Loonybins has penned a series of diatribes against Rusbridger. After a particularly demented tirade two weeks ago — accusing Rubbisher of taking a "freebie" to Hong Kong, which had in fact been paid for by his own newspaper — the *Grauniad* editor decided to exercise his right of reply. He wrote an article correcting some of Loonybins' more egregious factual errors, and faxed it over to the *Spectator*.

Whereupon Frank Johnson, having apparently forgotten his earlier promise, promptly spiked it.

Spectator readers will thus be deprived of several delightful stories included in Rusbridger's piece — such as his recent encounter with Paul Johnson at a drinks party in north London. Jerking his thumb in the direction of Salman Rushdie, another guest, Loonybins barked: "Rushdie's here. Shame there are no Arabs here. If there are Arabs at a party with Rushdie, I usually point him out and tell them: 'There he is, go and get him'."

NERVOUS hacks at *Scotland on Sunday* are beginning to wonder if their esteemed editor-in-chief, Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill, is quite the genius he led them to believe.

Presumably alarmed at the paper's sixth consecutive year-on-year sales rise, and the worrying fact that it scooped this year's UK Sunday Newspaper of The Year award, Brillo sacked *SOS*'s popular editor Brian Groome and installed tabloid hack John "Shopping Trolley" McGurk — who has swiftly proved his fitness to run a quality broadsheet.

McBerk's first decision as editor was to recall his correspondent from Hong Kong — who had already been in the colony for a fortnight — just two days before the handover to China. His reason: "Who's interested in Hong Kong?"

Nor has he been slow, in editorial conferences, to reveal his breadth of knowledge — wondering during Wimbledon how Jeremy Bates (very publicly retired last year) was getting on, asking who on earth Spike Lee (the subject of an arts interview) was, and double-checking that Bolivia was — wasn't it? — the capital of Peru.

BOSSES at Canary Wharf were shocked by the *Eye*'s recent story about Henry Giles, the young hack on the *Telegraph Magazine* who enlivened a house-party in Norfolk by groping 11-year-old girls, violently attacking fellow-guests with a spade and drinking vodka from a pint-glass.

Giles has since been sacked — though not, apparently, for his child-molesting antics. "If there's one thing this company cannot tolerate," a *Telegraph* executive explains sternly, "it is drunkenness."

FORMER *loaded* editor James Brown is making a big impression at *GQ*. He recently took over from the bookish Angus MacKinnon who was sacked for not "dumbing down" the men's monthly sufficiently.

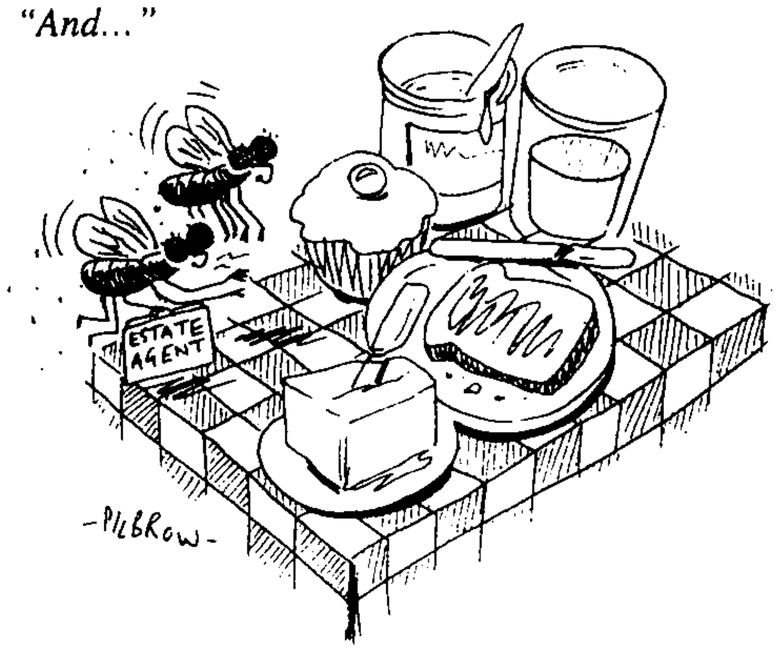
Like all lad mags, *GQ* is desperate for an Oasis interview to coincide with the release of the band's new CD. But careful negotiations with the charmless Gallagher brothers' record company, Creation, had ended in an impasse.

Creation had agreed to an interview, but it didn't want *GQ*'s suggested interviewer, Neil McCormick, to do the job. It wanted a friendly hack already "known" to the band to do the feature. Bravely, *GQ* refused to be dictated to editorially and stuck to its guns... until new editor Brown turned up and ordered staff to cave in to Creation's every demand.

An exodus of long-standing staff followed MacKinnon's departure. Nick Coleman, features editor, left after being handed an envelope by Brown who told him: "I've got something here that will please you." The derisory month's pay inside the envelope didn't please Coleman at all, especially since his wife was just about to have their first child. He stuck out for a six-month pay-off. Three other staff left of their own volition and Brown has also sacked Stephen Bailey, style guru and the magazine's award-winning columnist.

Brown's magic touch on *GQ* will be revealed in the October issue which Condé Nast and Nicholas Coleridge, its managing director, await in slavering anticipation.

"And this is the toilet,
"And this is the toilet,
"And this is the toilet,
"And..."



HALLO! THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! I AM glad to hear my chum Lord Brocket has raised the tone at HM Prison Ford where he is "banged up", as they say, thanks to a misunderstanding over some false insurance claims for stolen vintage cars. (The cars weren't stolen at all, merely mislaid! So forgetful, my fellow aristocrats.)

Charlie has been taking part in the weekly debates of the prison's Gavel Club, a splendid idea which enables the richer — sorry, better educated — inmates to get together with their own kind. The pro-hunting lobby wins a fine debate about blood sports, thanks to Charlie's contribution.

Meanwhile another Ford friend tells me the community service scheme, which allows inmates out into the community to be of "service", is all the rage. Apparently there is a terrific waiting list for the local bird sanctuary. "The birds are both feathered and unfeathered," says my friend with a wink. "No wonder all the chaps come back knackered." Whatever can he mean?

HALLO! *SIR Terence Conran has his critics, but at least he knows how to maintain standards. He won't allow any old riff-raff into his caffs — and quite right!*

After the collapse of Jonathan Aitken's libel case against the Grauniad, the paper's legal team and senior executives celebrated at the Graun's summer party, which they tastelessly renamed the "dancing on Aitken's grave party". Having got in the mood on champagne, the revellers progressed to one of Conran's swankier restaurants, Quaglino's.

Alas the Grauniad's brilliant counsel, George Carman QC, is not as young as he used to be and had difficulty negotiating the entrance. The doorman, assuming the great silk to be tired and emotional after the gruelling case, refused to let him in. Editor Alan Rusbridger remonstrated with the lackey and a conversation of the don't-you-know-who-I-am? ensued. But Conran's man won. Who do these Grauniad types think they are?

HALLO! I AM delighted to see that the gallant Jonathan Aitken is still a stickler for correct form. Although his writing paper is headed "From the Rt Hon Jonathan Aitken", since resigning as a privy counsellor he has scrupulously crossed out the "Rt Hon" on all his outgoing mail.

In a note to one aristocratic friend, thanking him for his sympathy, Jonathan adds mysteriously that "the worst is yet to come". What can he mean, poor dear?

JUST FANCY THAT

" It's so sordid Charles—having to meet like this."

Norman Thelwell, 1959

HALLO! IS MY friend Jeffrey Archer planning to go into partnership with that other distinguished stand-up artist, Jim Davidson, he of the politically correct views?

Jeffrey greeted Jim with great bonhomie in the central lobby of the House of Commons in the week before the recess and whisked him off for a private tete-a-tete. Perhaps the fragrant Jim was looking for a suitable sponsor to provide him with an "archer" or two with which to keep his long-standing promise to leave the country in the event of a Labour victory.

Or perhaps Lord Archer has recruited Mr Davidson to his campaign team for his bid for the mayorship of London. After all, if he is seeking the common touch, they don't come commoner or touchier than Jim!

'The Marquesa'

WORLD OF HYPE

WHO is the most shameless self-publicist in British bookland? Step forward Adrian Mourby, a former TV producer who began a new career as a novelist after being made redundant by BBC Wales a couple of years ago.

Mourby's books — marketed as Aga Sagas for Men, aka "Barbour sagas" — are so pisspoor they would attract little or no attention on their merits. So Mourby has come up with the brilliant wheeze of promoting himself as a "bad boy".

Stage one of the campaign was a feature in the *Daily Telegraph* early last year by his friend Nicola Harrison, who claimed to recognise herself as a character in his first novel, *We Think the World of Him*. "As I read on, my pleasure turned to outrage," she fulminated. "Adrian, my trusted friend, had stabbed me in the back with his Parker. Not only had he accentuated all my worst traits, he had *added* to them."

What looked like an attack on Mourby was actually a put-up job cooked together by Harrison and Mourby himself. She admitted to "rocking with laughter" as she read the book, and the piece included copious plugs for *We Think the World of Him* — which by an amazing coincidence, was issued in paperback that very week.

Delighted by the success of this stunt, Mourby planned his next *coup*. In February this year he wrote a feature for the *Telegraph* describing how he had saved his "stormy" marriage: "When mid-life crisis hit Duncan Lewis, the hero of *We Think the World of Him*, he moved into the family attic. Why didn't I move into our cellar?" Mourby also persuaded his long-suffering wife, a Welsh solicitor called Katharine Nicholas, to write a companion piece explaining how pleasant it was to have her husband exiled to the basement. "Like most writers," she explained, "Adrian has an inexhaustible appetite for attention."

Indeed. By another coincidence, this burst of attention occurred just after his new novel, *The Four of Us*, was published in hardback — a fact handsomely publicised at the end of the piece.

Now the paperback of *The Four of Us* has appeared. And guess what? Last Wednesday's *Telegraph* carried a massive feature by Katharine Nicholas describing how her marriage had survived 17 years despite Mourby's "numerous affairs". Although the piece was little more than a rehash of its predecessor — "He has always had an inexhaustible appetite for attention," we learned yet again — it served its purpose triumphantly: loads of free publicity for the gruesome Mourby in the very week he has a book out.

Is he really a serial philanderer? Some friends of Mourby have their doubts. But, as they point out, the *Telegraph* is hardly likely to run long articles in which an obscure author owns up to the "guilty secret" that he is, in fact, tediously monogamous.

TOP MARKS for "new" Labour's spectacular Uxbridge cock-up go in ascending order to: Tony Blair, aka "The President"; and Mandy Mandelson, who told Downing Street hatchet woman Sally Morgan that the party's general election candidate, David Williams, had to go because "he is not one of us", despite having nearly defeated the incumbent Sir Michael Shersby only months previously.

Next in line are the three toadying members of the party NEC's by-election panel: Richard Rosser (himself a member of Uxbridge Labour Party), Hilary Armstrong and Tom Sawyer groupie Margaret Jones, who fixed instead upon Blairite lawyer Andrew Slaughter, whose previous links with the constituency were tenuous, to say the least.

In fact Slaughter's earlier activities with the extreme left Labour Briefing, before he took communion at the Church of St Tony the Redeemer, was sufficient to make David Williams look a pillar of moderate respectability. So sure was "new" Labour's high command of the undying love and affection of the Uxbridge parishioners for the party that "The President" made two visits and Mandelson set up camp in the constituency, before making a fast getaway once the canvass returns showed a likely Tory revival.

This did not come before Mandy gave a number of press briefings claiming that "The President" was deeply unhappy at the way in which the hapless Williams had been de-selected; and not before Williams was further humiliated after being persuaded to write "a letter of support" for Slaughter to the local rag.

TONY BLAIR is to launch an inquiry into the death of MP Gordon McMaster following the discovery of a suicide note blaming Lord Dixon and Tommy Graham MP for the tragedy.

Friends of McMaster are looking for swift retribution, but the likelihood is that the inquiry will take as long as possible to conclude as little as possible.

Dixon and Graham deny spreading rumours about McMaster: specifically that he had AIDS rather than OP poisoning. But Labour MPs *did* gossip about the fact the McMaster was gay and stories of indiscreet cruising *were* exchanged by backbenchers.

When poor McMaster got his hand injured in what he said was a "mugging", they immediately began speculating that the incident had been "queer bashing" or an encounter with some "rough trade".

Any "new" Labour inquiry will probably not go into all this fraternal malice. And nor will the sad and rather mad suicide note be published.

"One day, son, all this will still be mine"

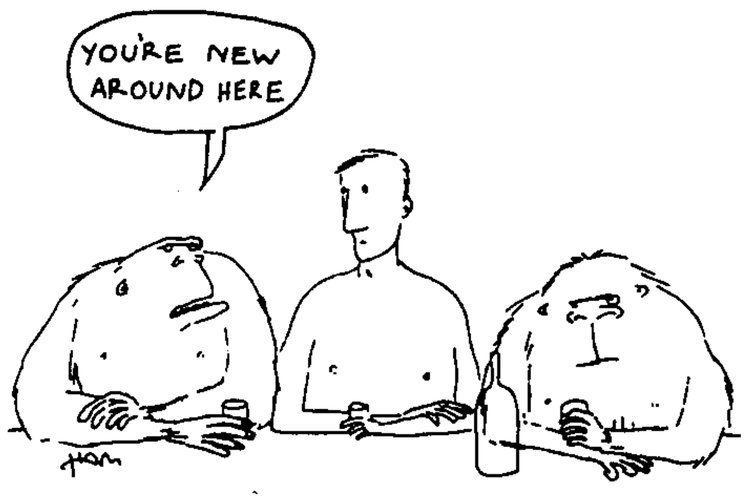
ALL is not well at the treasury where officials' egos have already been battered by Gordon Brown's acolytes, through whom all policy must be cleared.

The officials are fuming at the sizeable flak they're about to take for failing to stop Kenneth Clarke's electioneering boom which, they fear, will end in a bloodbath of penal interest and mortgage rates — coupled with more lost export sector jobs than the windfall tax could ever dream of creating.

As one senior Bank of England official put it squarely: "This cock-up is nothing to do with us. We'll just do our job. This government is going to get the recession it deserves."

But... further horror! Officials now believe the exhortation to further boom was not even the Brownies' fault. Brown had apparently actually lobbied hard for exactly the measures needed... and had been blocked by the prime minister.

A few days after the fateful budget announcements, Blair was asked if a bit more shouldn't have been done to cool the high-rolling exuberance of the house-price obsessed British middle classes. Oh no, said Tone. "I just couldn't do that to our voters." Will he or the treasury mandarins be proved right?



BOB WAREING, known to friends as Pongo and enemies as the "Voice of Belgrade", is another Labour MP who is about to disappear into the maw of "Newcastle Brown" after his hysterical attack on chief whip Nick Brown, the MP for Newcastle East & Wallsend.

Collecting the session's brass neck award, Pongo was found guilty of forgetting that he had set up a company called Robert Wareing Ltd and forgetting to register receipt of a £6,000 payment from a prominent Serb. He proceeded to blame Brown for reporting him to the beaks.

The public may think that a "humiliating apology" — the House sat in embarrassed silence wishing the statement over — and a one-week suspension are slight punishment in the circumstances. But Brown plans to exile Wareing, MP for Liverpool West Derby, to the Merseyside equivalent of Ulan Bator. Thus Pongo, 66, will live out the rest of this term like the discredited nomenclatura of Eastern Europe he so admired.

"NEW" Labour's spin doctors are already ruing the day they persuaded Tony Blair to do away with the twice-weekly prime minister's questions and replace it with one session: it has given cro-magnon man William Hague his one and only opportunity to shine. Hague now has the opportunity to fire a full six questions at the prime minister and is proving quite adept at getting under his skin.

ONE of Margaret Beckett's first actions on taking office as president of the board of trade was to speed up the much-criticised "dash for gas", as Frank Dobson used to call it when he held her portfolio in opposition.

She gave permission for an additional 90 megawatts of generation capacity at a proposed 700MW station being built at Sutton Bridge in rural Lincolnshire, where it will spew tonnes of carbon dioxide over villages and the Wash.

The permission for the original construction was given by the last government only nine months ago, but the builder, US firm Enron, apparently thought a new government could do better and sought and received Beckett's consent for the extension. Then she went off and declared open the Connah's Quay gas-fired station (see HP Sauce, 25 July).

IN THE TEAROOM

SO who's really been running the country this past 100 or so days while Tony Blair has been busy transforming himself into a B-movie director's idea of an idealistic young US president?

Peter Mandelson? Sure it's true he's had ministers electronically tagged between one and three to stop them enjoying boozy lunches with journalists; that his Excalibur apparatus controls the lip movements of backbenchers by remote control (even in the tearoom); *and* that he's effectively bugged the whole government team by upgrading the Cab-e-net computer system, allowing him to snoop into his colleagues' appointments diaries, monitor their media contacts, read their e-mail and apply mild electric shocks to any rectum straying "off message". The minister without portfolio has become the minister *with* laptop. But just because he's the master of cyberspace, does that make him a virtual prime minister? Derry Irvine doesn't think so.

It's difficult to look conceited wearing a Gilbert & Sullivan outfit while sitting on a woolsack. But the lord chancellor manages it. "Mandelson just does the packaging," whispers one of his legal eaglets. "Derry controls the product."

Irvine has insinuated himself on to many of the top cabinet committees and appears almost to preside at meetings of the prime minister's inner circle. Despite his professional training, and despite being a Lords man himself, he went well *ultra vires* in insisting on handpicking the chairmen of Commons select committees.

It is the way of politics that one day Mandelson and Irvine will clash. That time will come in the autumn when the question of a bill of rights comes to the top of the pile. Each man wants to be seen to bestow statutory liberties upon a grateful people, and each has his own idea of the scope and extent of the liberties the people should be allowed to enjoy.

To stay in the game Mandelson will have to win his seat on the national executive at party conference and elbow David Clark out of his cabinet chair as chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster. Oddly it is the supposed "control freak" Mandelson who is expected to take the more libertarian line.

'Urquhart'

THE *Mail on Sunday*'s recent scoop about treasury minister Geoffrey Robinson inheriting a fortune from a mysterious Belgian woman, Mme Joska Bourgeois, neglected to mention another close business relationship: Robert Maxwell.

Robinson, currently entertaining Tony Blair at his £3m Tuscan villa, has made his millions only recently. His dealings with the fat fraudster started in July 1987 when he became a director and shareholder of Central and Sheerwood plc (C&S), a property company owned by Headington Investments Ltd — Maxwell's holding company. The chairman of C&S was Robert Maxwell and his sons Kevin and Ian were on the board.

Robinson also had his own company, Transtech Ltd, which struggled to profit from marketing academic research into technology for industry. But in April 1991, C&S merged with Transtech and formed Transfer Technology plc. The Labour MP became chairman and held a 28 percent stake, Robert Maxwell was a director with 27 percent and his devoted sons joined him on the board.

Maxwell resigned from Transtech in June 1991, but only sold his shares shortly before he died (much to Robinson's later relief). When Transtech was floated on the stock exchange Robinson became a multi-millionaire and his shareholding is now worth £30m.

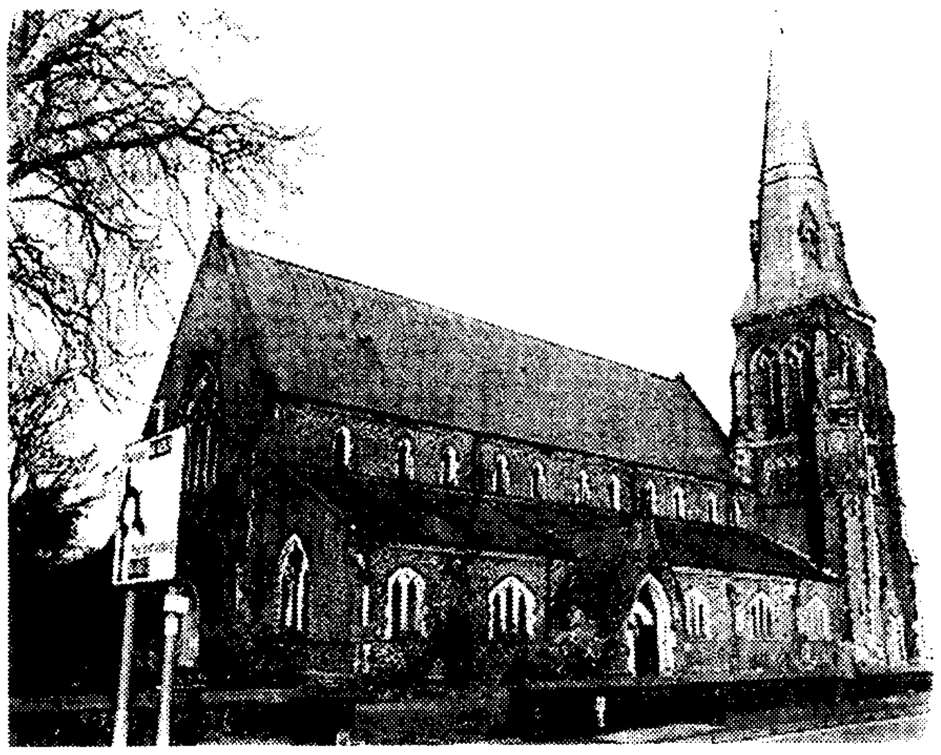
DESPITE admonitions from Madam Speaker for ministers who fail to inform parliament of departmental decisions but trail them past friendly hacks, the government's first privatisation — that of the Benefits Agency — was brought to the attention of hon. members via the Press Association on the day parliament went into recess. Agency staff had been told earlier on the same day to "stay behind after work for an important decision" — thereby learning of their fate even before the Press Association.

NOOKS and CORNERS

CHRIST CHURCH, Caernarvon, stands at the entrance to the royal fortress town. Designed by the architect Anthony Salvin — who restored Caernarvon Castle — it was built in 1861-64 and given its great spire in 1886. For many years the principal place of worship in Caernarvon, Christ Church is now redundant and derelict, its site overgrown with trees after more than a decade of neglect.

Used to store valuable furniture rescued from other redundant churches in Wales, Christ Church has been damaged and broken into, and much has been vandalised or stolen. It is particularly scandalous that a magnificent 18th century chamber organ once owned by the Marquis of Anglesey and put into Christ Church for "safe keeping" has been largely destroyed.

How has *this happened*? Because the Representative Body of the Church in Wales has failed to maintain the building or keep it secure. Why has it done this? That is a more difficult question, especially as there has been a local initiative to rescue the church and convert it into a multimedia arts and culture centre.



The scheme would have preserved the interior and was proposed by a local charity, Canolfan Caernargon Cyf, which had hoped to provide the town with a first rate venue for performing arts. It had been trying to buy the building from the Church of Wales for seven years. Last month the trustees of the representative body decided not to accept its bid but to sell to a commercial developer for conversion into flats. What remains of Christ Church will therefore now be wrecked.

There is more... and worse. The Canolfan group offered £75,000 for the building in 1994 and agreement was reached between solicitors for both parties the next year. But the Church in Wales declined to offer a contract to Canolfan. This meant that, without the necessary legal commitment, the charity could not ask grant-giving trusts for funds to buy and convert the building.

Mr C.D. Samuel, secretary to the trustees of the representative body, defends their behaviour by arguing that they were obliged to accept the developer's bid as the developer was able to produce the cash and proceed immediately whereas the local charity could not. This state of affairs, though, was brought about by the church's refusal to produce a contract of sale.

The representative body, answerable only to the governing body of the disestablished Church in Wales, is a charity exempt from the charities act of 1993 and is not required to publish its accounts. So we do not know how much the developer has offered for Christ Church. But, as the building has been allowed to fall into a disgraceful state of dereliction, we can be sure it is less than the £75,000 offered by the local charity in 1994.

The charities act requires that trusts disposing of buildings should seek the best valuation from a professional surveyor and advertise the sale before any acceptance. In this case, the Representative Body of the Church in Wales seems to have done everything possible to thwart the plan to make a fine listed church — paid for originally by local families — perform a widely desired community function. But, as we know from the behaviour of church commissioners in England, the representative body is much happier dealing with commercial developers — people these financial wizards can do business with. Of course they are not freemasons. Of course they would really like to see Christ Church be a theatre or whatever for the community. But they live in the real world where money must come first. No place for sentimentality in today's church.

The Representative Body of the Church in Wales is a scandal: this is far from the only case where a fine redundant building has been allowed to fall into decay through inaction, stupidity or whatever. At long last, a body modelled on the Redundant Churches Fund has been established in Wales — but too late to save poor Christ Church.

I AM sorry to learn that, despite local opposition, a planning application has been submitted to North Norfolk district council to demolish the old fishermen's sheds in Sheringham (except for one wall of the Upcher lifeboat shed) to make way for a neo-vernacular steel-framed building for the Lifeboat Museum** (Eyes passim). **Convenient that the district council is both planning authority and backer of the museum and in charge of conserving what little is left of the old town. But with any luck no lottery money will be forthcoming for what would be the ultimate triumph of the heritage industry — replacing something old and real with something new and bogus (and unnecessary).

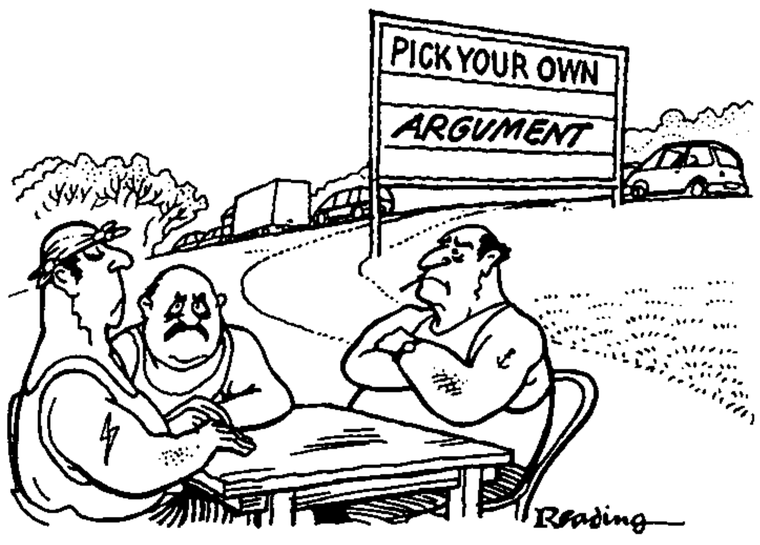
'Piloti'

MEANWHILE old Labour hands couldn't believe their eyes after the louche PPS to the lord chancellor, Tony Wright, broke the habit of a lifetime and failed to apologise for the actions of his peers.

Wright was furious at the decision to go ahead with the new Birmingham relief road, which he had campaigned against and which will run through his Cannock constituency. But is it right, ask some, for a member of the government, especially this government, to criticise ministers and not be punished?

DAVID MELLOR's appointment by the government as head of the football task force is a kick in the stomach for one well known Labour backbencher: the occasionally independent-thinking Kate Hoey.

Hoey puts sport first in her list of interests and has worked as an adviser to Arsenal and other clubs. She always had the ambition of being Labour's sport minister, but that job went to Tony Banks. Would she then be given the new job as head of the task force? No. Blair & Co would rather give the job to a widely despised Tory ex-cabinet minister than to a potentially awkward member of their own team.



THE NEW BOYS 5: Phil Woolas

THE heavily Yorkshire-accented Phil Woolas, former student leader and now Labour member for Oldham East and Saddleworth, had only been an MP for a few weeks when he spotted former Tory party chairman Dr Brian Mawhinney lunching by himself in the Commons.

Woolas thought it might be fun to take a photo to record the event, and the picture appeared in the following day's *Mirror* under the legend: "No One Likes Me Any Maw". MPs were furious. A copy of the paper was contemptuously paraded in front of the House by Devon East Tory MP Sir Peter Emery, and Woolas was carpeted by the Speaker for "a serious discourtesy to a colleague" — taking the snap without permission. He will forever go down as the Labour MP whose first major speech was a grovelling apology to a Tory member, albeit followed by a smirk when he sat down on the Labour benches.

The *faux pas* was not exactly in character, for Woolas cut an almost credible figure as a student superhack in the late 70s and early 80s, Blairising the Trot-filled Labour ranks of the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) and ridding the union of its 1968-*Evenements* image with some nifty revisionist capitulations.

There was one infamous incident in 1984 when, as president of the National Union of Students, Woolas warned the student hordes blocking Westminster Bridge during a demo that unless they called off their protest at once the army would be called in.

Woolas had arrived at Manchester University in the late 70s as a long-haired, Leeds United-supporting, womanising beer monster. He left four years later as a short-haired, Manchester United-supporting, wine-sipping, womanising philosophy graduate.

During that time he rose swiftly to become union general secretary, and was renowned for browbeating lesser mortals — particularly nubile hackettes — with the unanswerable rhetoric "Do you know who I am?"

There was a slight hiccup when he backed an apartheid-supporting, Monday Clubbing member of the Federation of Conservative Students as union entertainments officer, who then blew the entire events budget by the end of freshers' week. Woolas was blamed for his choice of protégé but he smarmed his way out and continued to grease his way through NOLS emerging as successful Labour candidate for the National Union of Students presidency in 1984.

In an interview with the *Manchester Evening News* at the time, he claimed that on leaving the NUS he would go to business school or take up a job in industry rather than the usual route to Westminster via a trade union post. So what happened? A few years after his stint as NUS president he secured a cushy trade union job — director of communications for the GMB. His subsequent political development has been a copy book example of old-to-new Labour. In 1986 he met Sinn Fein leaders and vowed to fight "all aspects of British oppression in Ireland". At that time he was also a Troops Out of Ireland supporter, a unilateralist and a soft Marxist member of the Clause IV group.

Woolas's parliamentary ambitions received a temporary setback in 1995 when he lost the Littleborough & Saddleworth by-election to the Lib Dems, a campaign which many parliamentary commentators claimed was the dirtiest ever on account of the hostility of accusations, counter accusations and backbiting. There was, however, one funny moment, when Woolas was asked by a journalist: "Do you agree with your leader on the..." Woolas interrupted with an emphatic "Yes" before waiting for the question. Peter Mandelson quickly chipped in with: "This is New Labour here."

'Backbiter'

EYE TV

Tiger Bay (BBC1)

JUST what the world needs: another soap opera. Not that Tiger Bay has been marketed as such, of course. *Radio Times* **describes it, just a little coyly, as an "eight-part drama serial", while BBC Wales, which produced it, has merely expressed the hope that it might be recommissioned by the network for a second stint next year.**

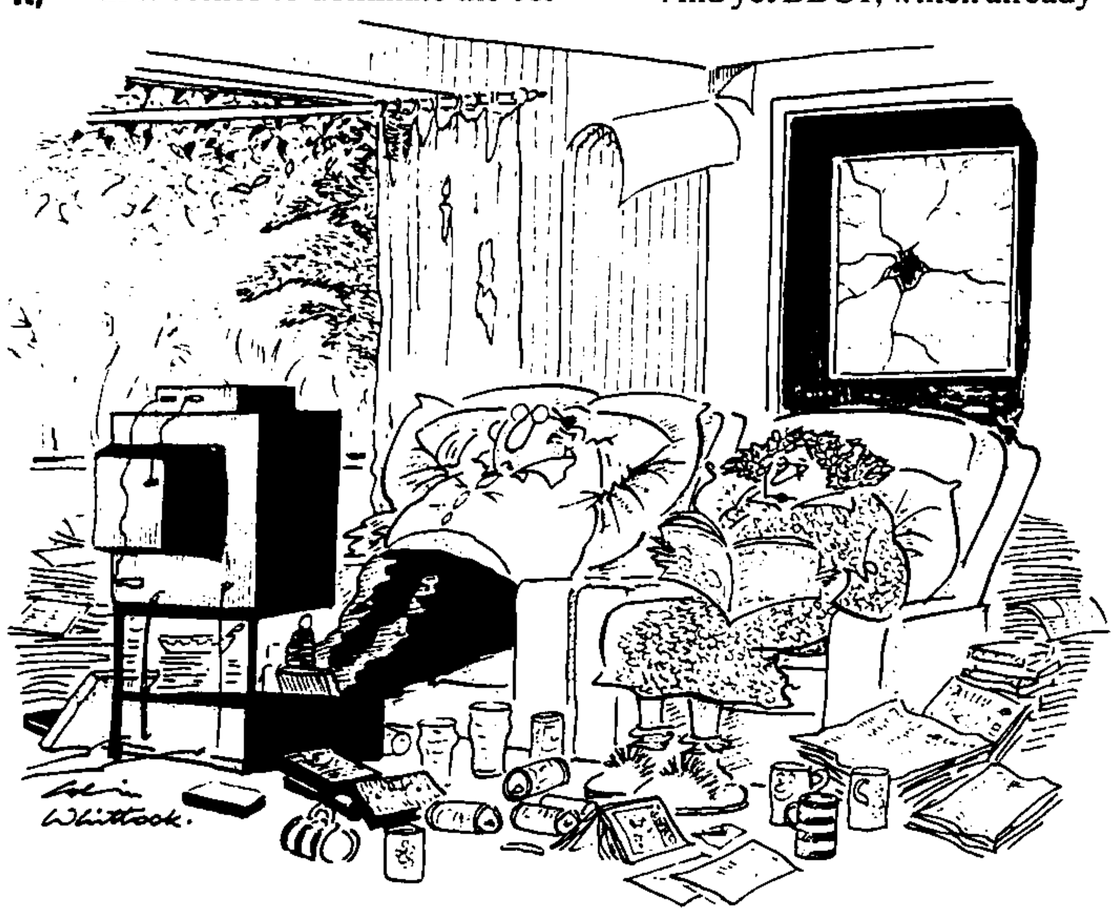
Like the doomed *Castles* a couple of summers ago, this is clearly a dry run for something a little more permanent, however — something that, if all went to plan, would run three or four nights a week in peak time for the rest of our lives.

The stakes are high; it's just the horizons that are small. The first week's episode ended with a suicide, but in all other respects this was suds as usual. Villainous middle-aged man engages in carnal relations with eccentrically eyebrowed 16-year-old slapper; grunting teenagers take car for joyride; nagging materfamilias wags finger. Set in south Wales this may be, but as in all other soaps, most characters are forever within a sentence of putting the kettle on for a nice cup of tea.

Scenes tend to be short, if not perfunctory, and the acting varies terrifyingly. Even at this stage you think you can spot which of the cast would not have their contracts renewed if the full series were given the go-ahead, although, given the continued presence of Ian Beale in Albert Square, obviously anything is possible.

Still, if you were going to launch a new soap in this bright post-quality era, this would probably be the way to do it. Shot on the run, apparently without rehearsal, *Tiger Bay* is extraordinarily cheap. Its eight episodes would barely cover Peter Sissons' suit budget on the *Nine O'Clock News*. But in those few weeks we shall no doubt enjoy enough plot and incident to keep a real community busy for around five years. If no one likes it, it can be quietly forgotten without further sullying the BBC's mighty reputation.

If it catches on, it can be eased gradually into the schedules until it comes to dominate the corporation's entire output, thus saving vast amounts of money that could be more usefully spent on executives' salaries. This is no trivial matter. Upon the success or failure of shows like *Tiger Bay* does the very future of British TV drama depend.



"Whatever did we do before we had cable TV?"

For by any reasonable standards there is simply no need for *Tiger Bay* at all. Soaps proliferate; they breed in the cracks between real programmes. Just when you think there are enough episodes of *Coronation Street* every week, the ITV network schedules one more. *Emmerdale* is shaping up for expansion; *Brookside* obviously craves it. Carlton's feeble *London Bridge* has recently crept up from one episode a week to two, maybe with a networking in mind. *Hollyoaks* is now ever-present on Channel 4, without anyone noticing or much caring. Channel 5's *Family Affairs* emotes away every weekday in its viewerless void. On BBC2 all the talk is of *This Life*, the first middle-class soap ever to gain an audience, albeit a very small one living exclusively within the M25. There are soaps everywhere and for everyone. Even Jaci Stephen can barely keep up. Most of the rest of us just feel soaped out.

And yet BBC1, which already has *EastEnders* threatening *Coronation Street*'s traditional dominance, still feels the need to try out new formats from time to time — or at least, new variations on the same old format. You could probably justify *Tiger Bay* on any grounds you like, but there's really only one reason it has been made, and there will be only on reason if it is recommissioned: it's extraordinarily cheap. Soon no one will remember when British TV drama was any other way.

'Couch Potato'

MEDIA NEWS

RADIO 4 controller James Boyle wants to give more time to news programmes. But what sort of news will they carry?

The answer became all too obvious on the day of the big announcement, when his changes to the schedules, which turned out to be pretty minor, were the lead story on Radio 4's 6 am news bulletin — as they were at 7 o'clock and 8 o'clock.

As if this weren't enough, that morning's *Today* programme kicked off at 6.30 with a breathless announcement that "The plan to revamp Radio 4 is out today" — whereupon presenter Alex Brodie interviewed BBC media correspondent Torin Douglas about it all. At 7.20 Brodie then had a lengthy chat with Jocelyn Hay from Voice of the Listener, and Sir David Naish of the National Farmers' Union, discussing the global significance of an extra weekly instalment for *The Archers* and an earlier start-time for *Farming Today*.

Half an hour later, just before the 8 o'clock news, James Naughtie boasted that the entire nation was agog to know about the changes — and that Boyle would be appearing live after the news, "so all with be revealed ere long".

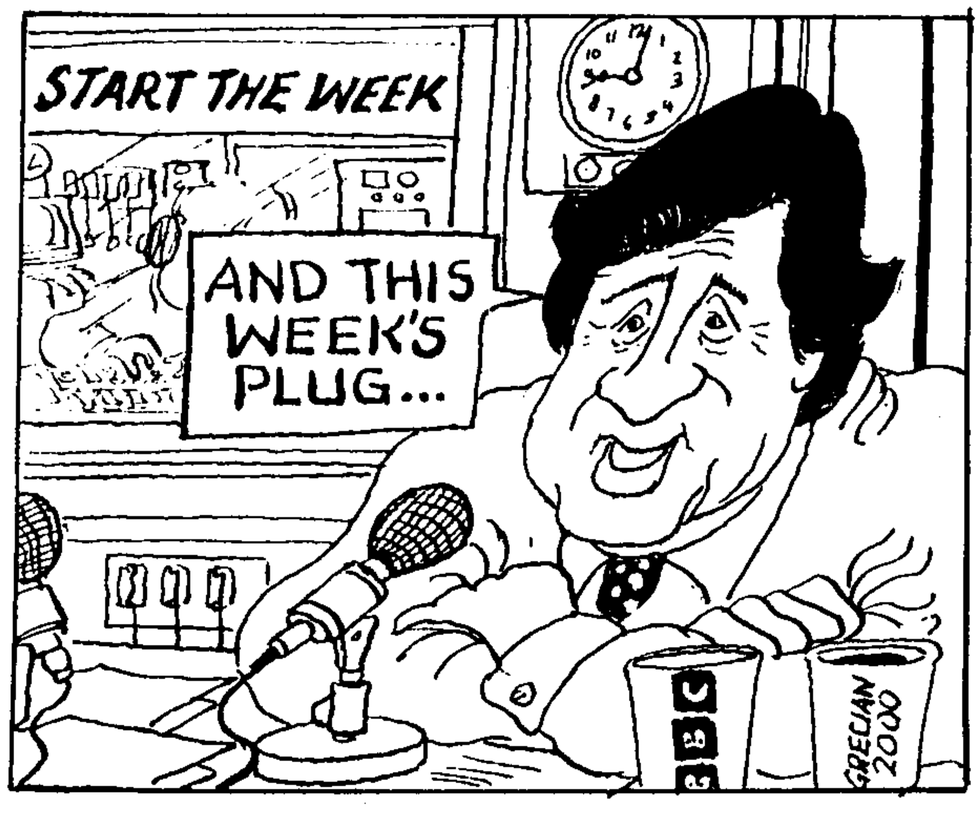
"Now hold on to your hats," Naughtie gasped a few minutes later. "Today's the day we'll hear what's happening to Radio 4!" During a seven-minute interview with Boyle, however, he failed to elicit any answers at all. By lunchtime, when Boyle had made his formal announcement, the story had been overtaken in the running order by a massive bomb attack in Jerusalem. The *World At One* gave the Israeli story due prominence, allowing it a generous five minutes — before devoting eight and a half minutes to the far more interesting subject of... changes to Radio 4.

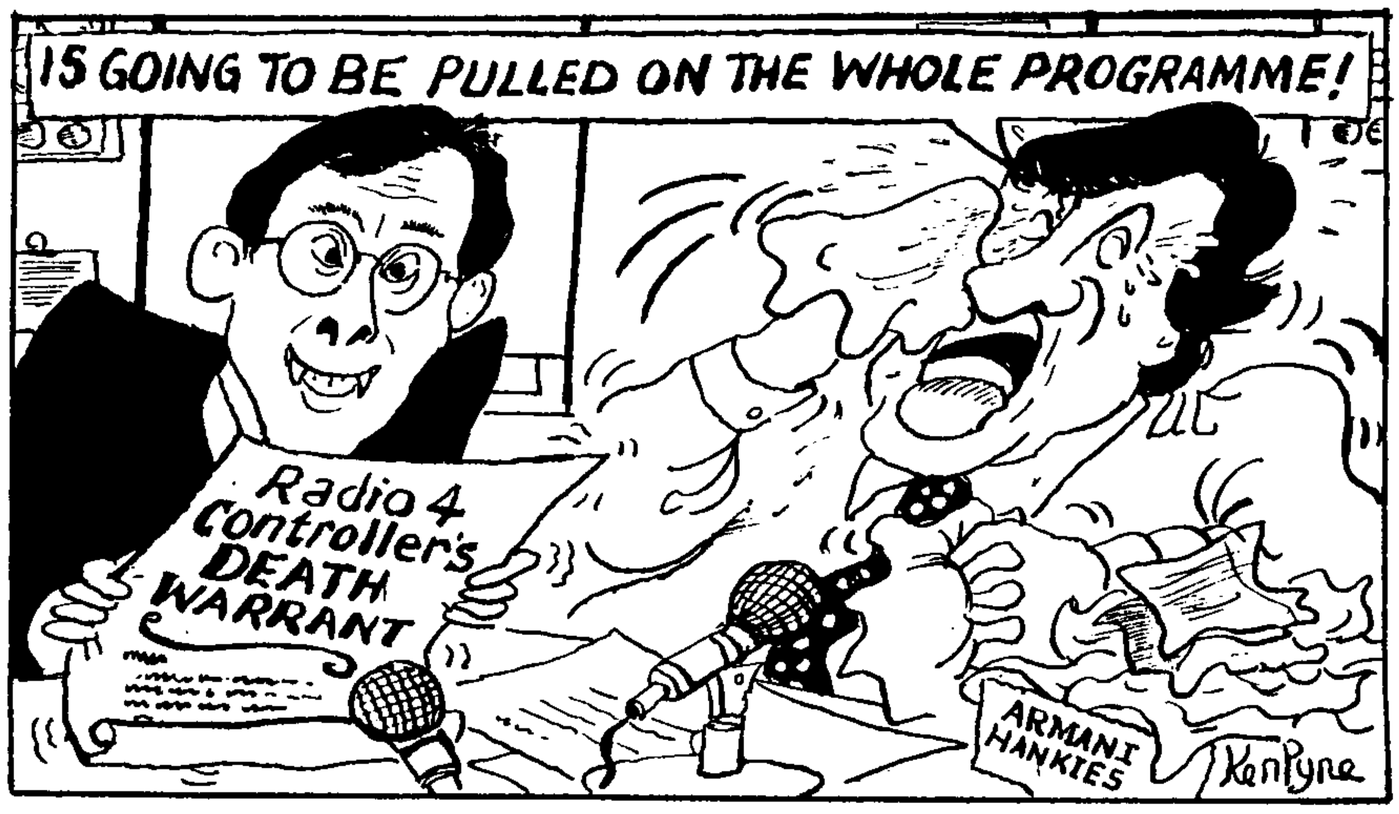
WHEN the BBC was looking for pop bands it could broadcast in concert to celebrate India's 50th year of independence, it fell upon Kula Shaker as a sort of new age, trendily appropriate band. Alas the BBC's poptastic managers are a little behind the times. The band's singer, Crispian Mills, told the music press only a few months ago: "You can see why Hitler got support, it was probably the uniforms that swung it."

In his previous band, The Objects of Desire, Mills performed alongside a former National Front member and, even worse, he recently told an interviewer from *New Musical Express*: "I'd love to have great big flaming swastikas onstage just for the f*** of it." Just the chap to help celebrate India's break from colonial rule...

BIRTSPEAK

WHILE the extravagant art-deco reception at Broadcasting House is closed for renovation, notices on hoardings which surround it urge visitors to "follow the directional signage" to the temporary reception around the corner. An example of the "directional signage" is displayed below the notice. To those unversed in Birtspeak, it looks remarkably like an arrow.





HACKS on several BBC news programmes continue to boycott the beleaguered news information service libraries which now charge them high fees thanks to the Beeb's mad internal market.

Last week, just four months late, a document headed "Effective as at 1st April 1997: Please circulate this to all in your area" explained how the new system has been "working". The Pay-As-You-Use charges are adding thousands to a programme budget: it costs £38.50 to get a fact checked; £25 to borrow a book; £25 an hour to copy a tape; and £12.50 even to see a contributor's contract.

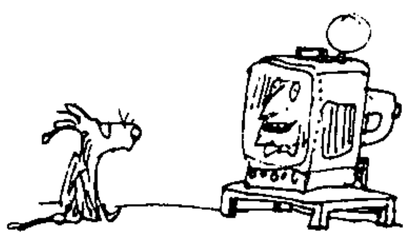
This makes low-budget programmes too expensive to commission and, in time, will lead to their replacement by cheap radio phone-ins or repeats of pisspoor American sitcoms. No wonder some producers, desperate to save their jobs and licencepayers' money, are routinely smuggling books out under jumpers and returning them, less routinely, post-production. Other wily hacks are using rival programme charge codes instead of their own to make expensive inquiries.

Still, things can only get worse before news information is closed altogether. Under "Bonking" Rod Lynch, BBC Resources is already shutting cuttings libraries at Bush House and Broadcasting House, and centralising the service at Television Centre. Half the 90 news information jobs will go and the service for Bush and Broadcasting House will be much less accessible.

Pressure on space also means thousands of cuttings may have to be junked.

As a consequence of "rationalisation" and because £1.4m has recently been withdrawn from BBC libraries, money previously ring-fenced for preservation of the archives has had to be diverted from a valuable project to repair and update old film back into funding what's left of the libraries and archives. Isn't the internal market exciting?

PS: News that the research library at Broadcasting House can no longer afford the "rent" it pays Resources has been welcomed by the absurdly grand head of BBC Broadcast, Will Wyatt, who intends to take over the ample space. Wyatt's present offices at the sunless end of BH, only recently upgraded with posh carpets and distinctive nameplates on doors, are no longer deemed suitable.



WHILE Owen Oyston continues to be allowed to manoeuvre for control of what remains of *Sunday Business* from his prison cell, the Radio Authority also apparently feels that serving a sentence for rape doesn't disqualify him from being a "fit and proper" person to exercise control of companies holding independent local radio franchises.

Bizarrely, Oyston has just picked up another franchise after taking over 1521AM, based in Craigavon in Co Armagh. During the rapist's enforced absence, the new acquisition will be controlled by his charmless daughter Karen. She is already the boss of Belfast City Beat, an oldies' station she relaunched despite one of her (many) ex-employees barricading himself in the studio and attempting to hijack the airwaves.

Exactly what offence does a company's main shareholder have to commit before the Radio Authority will let another organisation take over? Not paying a TV licence, perhaps?

DAVID MONTGOMERY may have succeeded in buying a chain of Midlands newspapers, but a terrible blow has been struck against Mirror Group's expansion plans in his Ulster homeland. A Belfast court has cruelly upheld the local cable operator's refusal to carry L!VE tv, the news bunny to topless darts station.

The American-controlled CableTel, which also owns the transmitters used by ITV and Channels 4 and 5, decided that L!VE was a waste of space which its subscribers would resent paying for. Rommel sued, but CableTel managed to persuade a judge to agree with its wholly reasonable position. L!VE boss Kelvin Mackenzie and Montgomery have now lodged an appeal.

O·B·N SPECIAL

SIR JAMES GOLDSMITH (Decd.)

"Sir James Goldsmith was a freebooting citizen of the world who combined unique business acumen with the jetset lifestyle of a latter-day buccaneer."
— Anthony Holden, *Express on Sunday*.

"A Brave Buccaneer."
— Headline on *Daily Telegraph* editorial.

"The life and times of Sir James Goldsmith were as buccaneering, turbulent and romantic as anything in fiction."
— Christy Campbell, *Sunday Telegraph*.

"Sir James Goldsmith was one of the most buccaneering and charismatic figures of the last 40 years."
— Nicholas Faith, *Independent*.

"If there is such a thing as charisma, the word was invented for him."
— Al Dunlap, *Sunday Times*.

"He was a great man whose merits will one day be recognised by everyone."
— Taki, *Sunday Times*.

"He had a profound sense of personal honour... In St Matthew's Gospel, Jesus Christ says: 'What doth it profit a man, if he gaineth the whole world, and sacrifices his own soul?' Jimmy gained the world, or much of it. But he never sacrificed his soul."
— Paul Johnson, *Sunday Telegraph*.

"In a previously unpublished conversation with the *Sunday Telegraph* shortly before his death, Goldsmith talked freely about his faith. 'I used to go once a year to Yom Kippur at the synagogue. Not as a religious act but one of belonging to a community, a symbolic act. I have my own set of beliefs'."
— Christy Campbell, *Sunday Telegraph*.

"Jimmy died like a Caesar."
— Taki, *Sunday Times*.

"His own death was tribal and patriarchal, and came from a time that preceded Abraham. The great chieftain summoned to his bedside all his family..."
— John Aspinall, *Daily Telegraph*.

"He had a famous romantic history, and I was close enough to see what the attraction was. In the ways in which our society best recognises, he was the dominant male — and he'd kept his figure. He was generous, imposing and powerful... He was a genial perfectionist."
— Laline Paull, *Guardian*.

"Women — ah, women! Who could handle them as Jimmy did? In many ways his harem structure was the envy of half the world."
— John Aspinall, *Daily Telegraph*.

"This is a life that was lived on nothing short of an heroic scale... his life was a great shout for freedom."
— Peter Oborne, *Express on Sunday*.

"We mourn Sir James Goldsmith, who died yesterday. In love, in business and in politics Sir James was larger than life... He was an original and a romantic, and whatever he did, he did with style... The world is poorer for his passing."
— Editorial, *Express on Sunday*.

"For sheer force of personality, I have not met his equal. In his later years he combined *imperium* with *auctoritas*. The former came to him through his own financial gifts, derived from his 19th-century forebears, which amassed for him a great fortune; the latter from his presence, his charm, his personal magnetism and the quality of his judgment... He had an immediacy of understanding of complexities that left me far behind."
— John Aspinall, *Daily Telegraph*.

"Sir James's entrepreneurial achievements are well known, as was his private life. What the broader public rarely appreciated was the power of his intellect... His table talk ranged effortlessly across economics, politics, history and ornithology, to name but a few of his many interests. In his latter years, he spent much time in his library in Burgundy and had read many of the 20,000 volumes. With his capacious memory, he could recite large chunks of these."
— Editorial in *Daily Telegraph*.

"He was irresistible, charming, autocratic and untamed. He died as he had lived with courage and panache, and worthy of much respect."
— Lynda Lee-Potter, *Daily Mail*.

"Goldsmith was not only the greatest single business person I have met, he was the greatest man I have met... He was a giant. He had an enormous intellect... I absolutely idolised him."
— Al Dunlap, *Sunday Times*.

"It has not been the media's finest hour. Never have I read so much rot. I am talking about Sir James Goldsmith and the press coverage of his death."
— Taki, *Sunday Times*.
(*Shome mishtake, shurely? — Ed.*)

"Next time keep your opinions about gardening to yourself!"

LUVVIES

"It was so heartless. I just loved playing Tinky Winky. I really understood him and got into the role... I've never felt such rejection... They told me they wanted me to say eh-oo in a high-pitched voice, then at the last second they wanted it in a low voice which gave me no time to prepare. Playing Tinky Winky was much more physically demanding than any Shakespeare... I really threw myself into the character... I was always the one to test out the limitations of the costume. I was the first to fall off my chair and roll over. I took all the risks."

DAVE "Tinky Winky" THOMPSON on his sacking from "Teletubbies" Independent/Mirror/Sun

Submitted by Everyone.

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

Pseuds Corner

I used my arms as jack levers and raised myself out of the pool. I spoke to him, and he caught the word as deftly as if I had thrown it. This was the edge of time, between chaos and shape. This was the little bit of evolution that endlessly repeats itself in the young and new-born thing. In this moment there are no cars or aeroplanes. The Sistine Chapel is unpainted, no book has been written. There is the moon, the water, the night, one creature's need and another's response. The moment between chaos and shape and I say his name and he hears me.

JEANETTE WINTERSON
Independent on Sunday

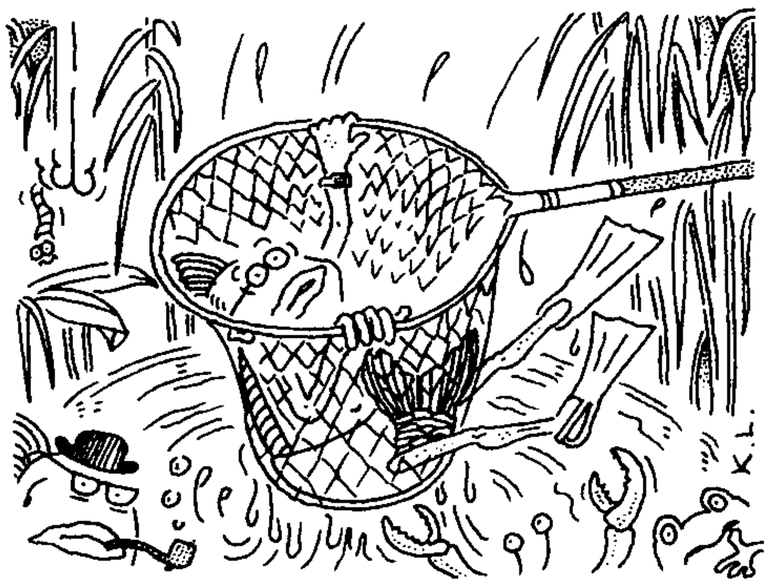
Christ almighty. It moves vertically through salted pressures with a head that can see sideways. It is red in tooth and claw. It swoons and burns and swells and cracks and froths at the mouth. It rains down on you, abundantly, ceaselessly, mercilessly. It absolutely will not stop. It is shattering the atmosphere. It glows from every burst pore. It is a tormenting wind murmuring. It is a curious germination. It is pleasure playing a trenchant and mystic melody on the sharp edge of a thin dream.

PAUL MORLEY (on a Prodigy album)
Uncut Magazine

Human behest, nature's best

O contours of the Southern Downs
your beauty confounds
Since where is all the cover
— trees, hedgerows or even ragged mounds?
Like shaven pubes, your rotund hills,
stand stark, naked, bare yet fair.
So majestic, so calm, life's balm,
despite human imprint, a lack of natural charm.

DAVID JAMES
Lewes News



Every swim is a baptism, in which you metaphorically lose your life in order to find it. You are drowned that you may be reborn from the water's womb. Like Finn MacCool in the Irish legend, you track your own evolutionary history, leaving behind your land-bound animal body and becoming a fish again. By going down a level in the evolutionary scale, you come back up with the wisdom of the lost instinctive oneness with the world.

ROGER DEAKIN
Guardian

The best, and worst, thing about Cambridge was the feeling that nothing you could do would make any impact, ever. Metaphysically, it has a crushing weight, the weight of the canon. To come out from under it, to realise its supreme gifts of lifelong intellectual curiosity and the striving for excellence, you have to be as strong, and as doomed, as Sisyphus.

AMANDA CRAIG
Observer Life magazine

CONTRIBUTORS: Brian Clover, Richard Rowley, Jos Colover, Linda McGowan, Juliet E. Laxton.

£10 paid for entries.

DOING THE ROUNDS

Folic acid and pregnancy

IN 1991, the Medical Research Council's (MRC) vitamin study group published some amazing research in the *Lancet*. The incidence of neural tube defects (NTDs) such as spina bifida could be reduced by 75 percent if all pregnant women took 400 micrograms of folic acid (vitamin B9) each day from before conception to the end of the twelfth week of pregnancy.

The MRC group wasn't sure how folic acid achieved this — "overcoming a metabolic block" was its best guess — but the results were beyond doubt. This was a rare example of preventative medicine delivering the goods and stopping most cases of a devastating disease. Or at least that was the theory. Six years on, and the incidence of NTDs hasn't changed. What's gone wrong?

Very few health workers read the *Lancet*, so the government sent leaflets to all doctors and their practice staff, exhorting them to tell any woman planning a pregnancy to start taking folic acid tablets. This failed for several reasons. First, GPs were pissed off at the imposition of the health reforms and the new GP contract, which contained a whole batch of completely useless yet obligatory health promotion tasks. The folic acid leaflets joined the others in the dustbin and professional awareness remained low.

A second problem was (and remains) that 35-50 percent of all pregnancies are unplanned — so women can hardly be expected to take folic acid from before conception when it's effective. Even when couples do plan pregnancies, it is vanishingly rare for them to consult a health professional first.

After five years of thumb twiddling, the government had achieved nothing. Only 9 percent of women knew about folic acid; 5,000 couples had needlessly suffered the trauma of miscarriage and late termination; and 750 had given birth to severely handicapped children, most of whom would have had normally developed spines but for a short course of a cheap, safe water soluble vitamin.

In 1996 the US Center for Disease Control recognised that health education and over-the-counter tablets would never deliver a significant reduction in NTDs, especially since their prevalence is greatest among the young and poor who don't plan pregnancies and are less aware of health issues. American food manufacturers were ordered to add folic acid to flour and a variety of staple foodstuffs as the only realistic chance of prevention. This comes into effect from January 1998.

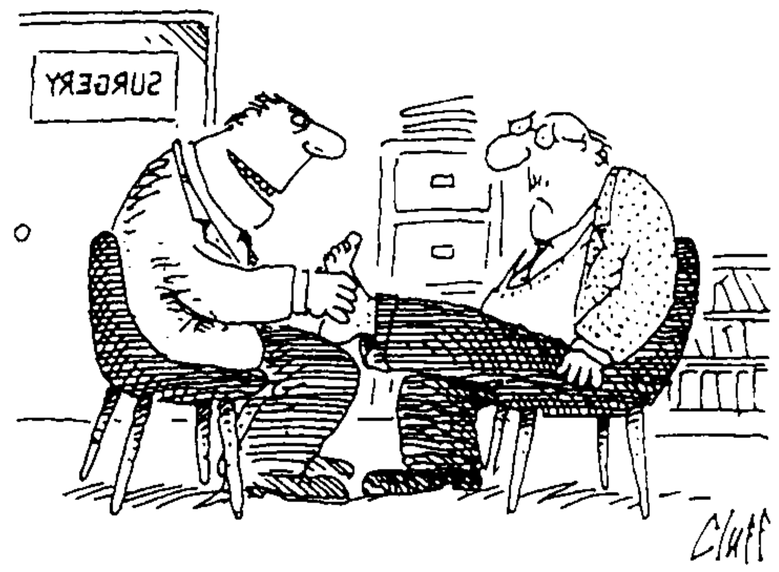
So what did the UK government do? Why, it spent millions of pounds on more education. In May 1996 Zoe Wanamaker voiced-over an expensive, confusing and long-forgotten TV commercial. The Health Education Authority (HEA) then stuck Sophie Grigson in front of piles of green vegetables extolling the virtues of folate-rich foods. Alas, cooking vegetables destroys their folate. Even in raw form, you'd need to eat six pounds of sprouts a day to absorb the 400 mcg needed. Unfortified diets can never deliver enough folate to make an impact.

And neither can an HEA campaign. Research into the first six months of the campaign — the most influential period — was presented last month. Although 93 percent of women now knew about folic acid and 71 percent took it at some stage during the pregnancy, only 1 in 10 took it from well before conception to week 12 — the time needed for it to be effective. All this was horribly predictable — as was the HEA's response. GPs and their staff have been called on to do more health education.

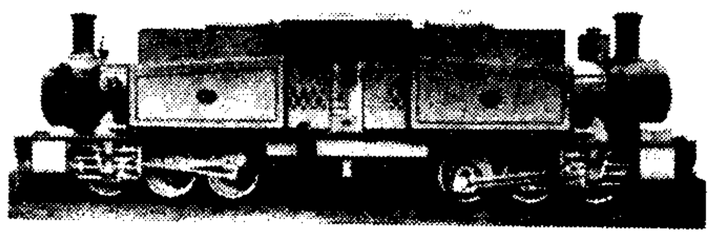
Folic acid is already added to 15 percent of breads and 50 percent of cereals, although it would take 12 slices or four bowls a day to prevent NTDs. Adding enough to flour so that everyone got 400mcg from, say, two slices of bread would not effect the taste or meet objections from millers. Neither would it be expensive — the money wasted on ineffective health education could have funded the programme for several years.

There are two clinical arguments against fortification: there is a theoretical risk that folate can affect epilepsy medications, although this has never been seen in practice. Also, a very rare but potentially serious neurological side effect of folic acid can occur in elderly people with untreated Vitamin B12 deficiency. However, as B12 deficiency causes lemon yellow skin, very few patients remain untreated. In America, the benefits of fortification have been judged to outweigh these small risks. In the UK, the precedent of treating large numbers of people not at risk for the benefit of the unborn was set when boys were immunised against rubella as part of the MMR vaccine. Increasing the folate fortification of flour is less uncomfortable, less risky and would have just as great an impact on normal births. Not to do so now — six years and 6,000 abortions later — is negligent in the extreme.

M.D.



"That's a nasty ingrowing toenail, Mr Kite — have you considered euthanasia?"



SIGNAL FAILURES

ONE feature of the private train companies is their lack of concern for staff morale.

Last month Great North Eastern Railway, whose miserliness matches its lack of tact, told staff they would not be receive any more bonuses for 1996 but could expect one for 1997.

A letter from chief executive Christopher Garnett continued: "The aim of this payment is to reward employees for the improved performance of the company. Clearly, therefore, this payment can only be made to employees who have not partaken in any industrial action. "Any group of employees who have negotiated wage increases above the level of inflation... would have the element that was above inflation deducted from the bonus payment at the end of the year."

A fortnight later Garnett wrote again. "We are now finding a serious problem in that some of the information we have been passing on [to staff] has been leaked to the press." Threats of "a very strong disciplinary line" being taken if more information leaked did not, happily, stop the letter being passed immediately to the *Eye*.

Nor are drivers at Regional Railways North East too happy with bosses who launched a recruitment drive after shedding 80 drivers (see *Eye* 929). Last week the company blamed union reps for forcing it to introduce an emergency timetable which includes buses replacing trains and "less than 10 trains a day... being coupled together to improve the availability of drivers" (ie services being cancelled because too many drivers were dumped).

'Dr B. Ching'

Rotten Boroughs

Hackney

WHILE the Barratt inquiry into the Mark Trotter scandal (see *Eyes passim*) continues at Hackney council, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) has concluded its own report.

The NSPCC found that Trotter began abusing Hackney children only a month after he arrived from Liverpool to work at Hackney Wick's Trowbridge House children's home. Although he was cleared, two months later it was alleged he had abused another child. This time he was suspended for six months but allowed eventually to return to work.

In 1984 two more boys accused Trotter of abusing them. Again Hackney suspended and cleared him. That year Merseyside police interviewed Trotter after a Liverpool home resident claimed he had been buggered by Trotter. Hackney responded by giving Trotter a cushy job "fighting" rate-capping... before allowing him to return to work again looking after children. Trotter died of AIDS in July 1995, a month before Merseyside police returned to arrest him for abusing five Liverpool children in 1980.

It shouldn't take Barratt long to work out if Hackney council exonerated Trotter on account of his Labour party links. For Trotter, when he was not buggering kids in care, held a host of political posts via the Labour machine: chair of Wentworth primary school governors; Labour party agent for Hackney's Wick ward and Hackney South & Shoreditch constituency for whom he was also "education" officer; member of the panel of council candidates (at the expense of one Tony Blair, omitted for being too right wing); and shop steward for the town hall union Nalgo.

Junket of the Week

AFTER the Welsh office cut Cardiff council's budget by £18.5m, the city is bouncing back by trying to build bridges with, er, San Francisco. Council leader Russell Goodway and chief executive Byron Davies, plus wives, went on a seven-day jolly which will cost taxpayers £4,450 for flights and accommodation, plus whatever exes they get through while drumming up business for Cardiff. Said Cllr Goodway: "We must put parochial interests aside and promote Cardiff for the good of Wales."

Knowsley

MORE from the rancid north-western borough where Cllr Steve Bannister, having pleaded guilty to eight charges of indecent assault against a young girl, has received a 15-month jail sentence. The relative leniency of the term was probably aided by a glowing character reference from one Cllr Mike Kearns. But Kearns's action in helping the self-confessed paedophile will not inspire confidence among social services staff dealing with dozens of child abuse cases in the area: Kearns is vice-chairman of Knowlsey social services.

Lambeth

FORMER residents of Kerrin Point, Kennington, the 22-storey council block devastated by a gas explosion, have taken their complaints about Lambeth council to Downing Street and demanded a public inquiry.

Lambeth doesn't want one, and it may also be reluctant to answer some of their other questions. These include:

- Does the council know which contractor was working on which of the three gas boilers under Kerrin Point?
- Why were two of the boilers replaced this year with boilers that had already been decommissioned?
- One firm of contractors has admitted it did not know why one boiler was not working... Was this the boiler that blew up?
- Who authorised Nedalo UK to start installing a generator at Kerrin Point to sell electricity to the national grid?

Relations between displaced residents and Lambeth weren't helped when councillors at a full meeting agreed to give other motions precedence. The debate on the explosion thus came at the end of the meeting after a one-hour discussion about wheelie bins. away as, er, Liverpool.

Manchester

MANCHESTER has again shown how it is preserving the environment by allowing it to be concreted over.

People in Blackley, in the north of the city, are used to the city council desecrating their once green suburb. Now they are fighting to save one of their last patches of grass, Hazelbottom sports ground.

Hazelbottom, used since 1919, has four pitches — for football, five-a-side and cricket — plus a bowling green, two tennis courts, a netball court and a club with licensed bar. But it is owned by chemical giant Zeneca (formerly ICI), which says the complex doesn't make enough money. It wants to sell up and make way for a 500-home estate and service road.

Furious locals have formed a charity to buy the land, which has been valued at around £300,000. But Zeneca wants £1.3m, a price based on its value should planning permission be granted.

Planners in fact refused permission in October: not surprisingly as the city has supposedly committed itself to turning Manchester into the sports capital of Britain with bids for international games and a new national football stadium. Locals had also mounted a vociferous campaign having identified the ground as contaminated from decades of chemical pollution.

But then in came Graham Stringer, scourge of environmentalists, supporter of Manchester airport's second runway, chair of the airport company, north Manchester councillor and now Labour MP.

Stringer and his poodle Richard Leese, his successor as city council leader, back Zeneca saying it is helping a local business (one which has shed thousands of jobs) and claiming that if the council rejects the company it would only appeal and win after a public inquiry.

Opponents dismiss this as "defeatist" and "gutless", but surprise surprise... the council then overturned its own planning committee and gave Zeneca permission. The campaigners hope sports minister Tony Banks will now step in.

Letters

Loadsamoney

Goldsmith

Sir,

I wonder if any of your readers have noticed the similarity between the late Sir James Goldenballs and Loadsamoney? Are they by any chance related? I think we should be told!

Yours faithfully,
PETER THOMAS,
Aylesbury, Bucks.

Sir,

You may use, abuse or misuse the following:

"So, farewell then
Sir Jams.
In the end
His writ
Ran larger than yours."

Admirer, aged 60¾

When I was a solicitor's articled clerk in London in the mid-1950s, my boss's favourite client was Señor Patiño. Young Jimmy (21) ran off with his daughter, Isabella. I was handed a writ or something, and told to serve it on the audacious fellow, if I could find him. Fat chance! Gretna Green, here we come...

His motto: never miss an opportunity.

JACK MOORE,
Cap Ferrat, France.

Sir,

Your fond farewell to Sir James Goldsmith recalled an anecdote told me by the late Maurice Goldsmith, the distinguished science writer. He was once invited to a dinner party by Sir James, who had mistakenly believed they were distantly related. Over the meal the conversation turned to Hitler's treatment of the Jews. Sir James assured the assembled company that since those who died had "lacked the enterprise to get out", they deserved no sympathy. At that, Maurice Goldsmith got up and left, "entirely disgusted". But it was, really, just the ultimate free-market interpretation of the Holocaust.

Yours sincerely,
RICHARD HALL,
Upton, Oxon.

Yo ho ho

Sir,

Is it my imagination or has anybody else noticed that the voice of William Hague bears an uncanny resemblance to that of Captain Pugwash?

Yours etc,
A. GARSIDE,
Newton With Scales.

Feng Shou
Tai Chi Chuan
Shiatsu
Chinese Cookery
Yoga
'A'Level Computer Studies
Spice Girl Studies

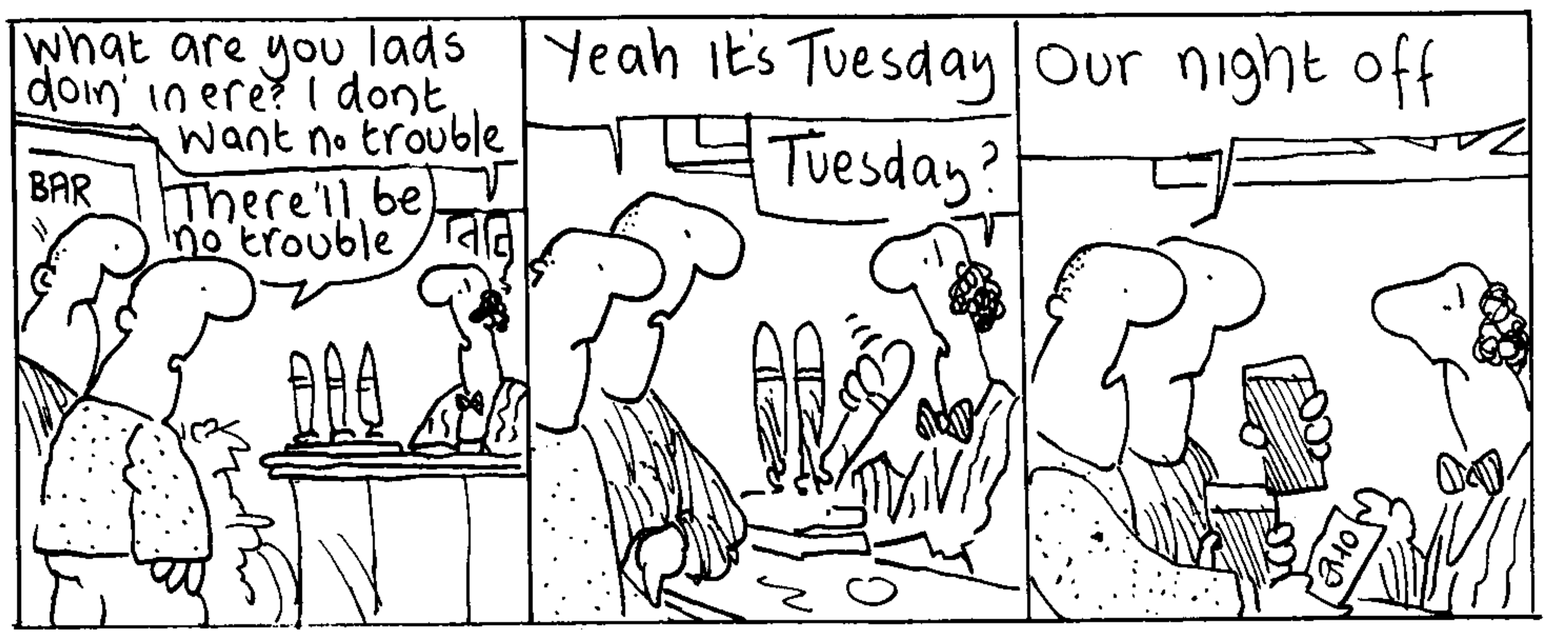
Just a few of the courses on offer at Honiton Community College.

DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

Sidmouth Herald

Yabc

HUSBAND



Bill of rights

Sir,

I am glad you have now withdrawn your allegations concerning BA. (HAVE WE? ED) *Your list of "facts" confuses some facts and some false accusations. You are quite right that I have been in the news recently asking questions about Lord Simon. You are also correct that I did have paid full-time employment with Robert Fleming and then with N.M. Rothschild before entering the House of Commons. You are right in saying that I was elected as MP for Wokingham in 1987 and was head of the prime minister's policy unit in the middle 1980s. You are wrong to say that when I resigned my directorships and took up a job as a junior minister at the department of trade and industry my brief was to supervise privatisation. I was minister for corporate affairs and had no responsibility for the privatisation programme which was supervised by the treasury.*

When you list a series of privatisations handled by Rothschilds and other City banks you do not set out the dates of the privatisations, many of which predate my arrival as a minister. Nor do you point out that as a minister I did not handle any of the privatisations you list nor did I ever involve myself in the selection of the privatisation adviser for those privatisations.

You also get your dates wrong concerning UBM and Norcros. I was not a director of either UBM or Norcros in 1984. I joined the board of Norcros in 1985. I trust you will put the record straight by publishing this and will then cease making foolish allegations that have no substance in fact.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN REDWOOD MP,
House of Commons, London SW1.

Court short

Sir,

With reference to item Jobwatch (HP Sauce, EYE *929): I hold no brief (sic) for Mr Budgen, the former Tory MP, apparently knickerless and reduced to pleading as a barrister in the lower courts. However, is it possible that he is out of touch with current legalese because he had been devoting himself full-time to his duties as an MP? If true, would this be a record?*

I think we should be polled.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID MACK,
Newton Mearns, Glasgow.

Flying visit

Sir,

The Marquesa really must pay more attention when visiting RAF bases. Reference the piece in EYE *929 — and for the sake of the accuracy of her much-awaited memoirs — it was RAF Sealand, not Fealand, where she was. Or perhaps her informant had a lisp?*

Either way, full marks to those who took down the plaque in "honour" of Aitken. Mind you, if they had paid attention to EYES PASSIM *they might well have considered someone patently more lasting to open their facility.*

More power to your organ.
KEN ELLIS,
Barrowden, Rutland.

Sound bitten

Sir,

The satirical excellence of EYE *929 was spoilt by the mean, spiteful and cruel piece entitled "Early Music News".*

That your normally esteemed organ should denigrate the York Early Music Festival in general and Peter Seymour in particular, beggars belief.

Admittedly, the festival's opening event, Bach's Mass in B minor, only warranted a mark of 9.6 out of 10, compared with Yorkshire Bach Choir's usual score of 11 out of 10. But the YEMF was, overall, artistically successful.

Your pathetic jibes aimed at assassinating Peter Seymour's highly-regarded character is [sic] scurrilous and lacks [sic] objectivity.

Dr Seymour's considerable reputation as a top choir-trainer and exceptionally capable choral and orchestral conductor is now recognised nationally and beyond. Pride of place in his many artistic achievements must be his formation and development of the Yorkshire Bach Choir: arguably one of the best British choirs of its type and size.

Peter and his accomplished wife Yvonne devote a tremendous amount of their time, talent and energy to the musical life of both the university and the city of York. I shall continue with my subscription, but please, Mr Editor, let your readers have more fact — instead of abusive and defamatory fiction — about York's musical scene.

Yours somewhat disappointed,
JOHN TIERNEY,
Acomb, York.

Board witless

Sir,

The excruciatingly laboured and boring intellectual snobbery displayed by Kerber in Supermodels does not withstand close examination. Cranially challenged Melinda and Wayne are depicted in EYE *928 poring over a 12-by-8 square board. As most bimbos know, chess is played on an 8-by-8 board. Perhaps Kerber should be told.*

Yours observantly,
G. NAHARNOWICZ,
London NW10.

Lookalike

Portillo

Pol Pot

Sir,

Has the sadly-missed member for Southgate been spending his holidays in Cambodia? I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
A.P. BREMER,
London W1.

Bang to rights

Sir,

Bookworm is right about the exaggerated claims made about Leonard Sellars SHUT IN THE TOWER, *but wrong about the date of the "revelation" of Lody's execution in the Tower. In fact the first published account appeared in William Le Queux's* GERMAN SPIES IN ENGLAND, *published in 1915.*

Yours faithfully,
STEPHEN BAISTER,
Purley, Surrey.

Yob rules

Sir,

Whilst being a fan of Tony Husband's witty strip Yobs, I cannot help but feel that the appearance of the Yobs is not, sadly, in keeping with these troubled times. There is an overbearing body of evidence to suggest that Yobs nowadays are clad entirely in designer sportswear and baseball caps, often worn backwards. Tony Husband's Yobs, although endearingly violent, dysfunctional and quintessentially Yobbish, would not look out of place at a Stonehenge rave, a gay rights march, a motorway protest — need I go on?

I will however continue to read the strip.

Yours faithfully,
NEIL C. THOMPSON,
Lancaster.

"He won't be long — he's just putting on his face"

Death sentences

Sir,

You are reported as quoting David Green as saying: "If you lock me up, I'll kill myself" ie not in any particular type of cell but anywhere. What alternative could avoid this "tall" order (bail + re-offending?) One way of avoiding "cells" is to refrain from criminal activity; but it is so typical of this sort of recital of events that the reader is invited in more than halfway through the incident: not a word about the burglary, its scale and victim(s) and its effect on the latter, about Mr Green's criminal record, if any (could one hazard a guess!), which could give a clue as to how many potential victims may have been spared by his suicide (a point, never remarked upon, applying to all prison suicides). As to "insensitivity", there is nothing particularly "sensitive" about being burgled (a much underrated crime, leaving, in many cases, a long trail of upset).

"Custody" might be better employed in campaigning against the activities which lead up to "Custody". As with other such cases it seems that the culprit can behave as viciously, foolishly, whatever as they like, but woe (and suspension, compensation etc.) betide anyone else who does not behave/respond absolutely impeccably.

Yours faithfully,
L.G. HOLT,
Chislehurst, Kent.

Insect aside

Sir,

I bet the worthy and admirable Hampshire Butterfly Conservation organisation is none too pleased that on both sides of the headline proclaiming the relevant article ("Bread and Butterflies" in Footnotes) you have printed a clear representation of the widespread and common, day-flying Magpie Moth.

Ouch! And you were so nearly right.
Better luck next time!

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN JOHNSON,
Morpeth, Northumberland.

I-SPY

VILE & VILE SOLICITORS

NSW, Australia

CROTCH PARTNERSHIP SOLICITORS NORWICH 617331

Norwich

Submitted by T.J. Wells and Katharine Hughes. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Cash dummy

Sir,

*Your item in Books & Bookmen (*EYE *929) about William Dalrymple filing a review to the* SUNDAY TIMES *of a book with 60 pages of another book bound into it would have made a better story had Dalrymple not called me on 7 July to say that his proof copy was faulty, and had a new copy sent round to him, as the publishers, Hamish Hamilton, are happy to confirm. Your spy obviously saw the book that Dalrymple rejected. He read the complete one from cover to cover, with his usual thoroughness, and his review was printed on 13 July.*

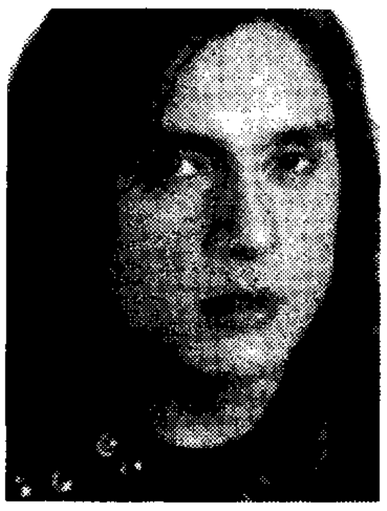
Although your selective quoting from it obscured this, he greatly admired the book, Sunil Khilnani's THE IDEA OF INDIA, *which he called "the most sophisticated analysis of the country's political economy to be published for years".*

Dalrymple is not snooty and precious — nor is he an Old Etonian.

Yours etc,
CAROLINE GASCOIGNE,
Deputy Literary Editor, The Sunday Times, London E1.

Lookalike

Ferdy



Gordy

Sir,

It has recently come to my attention that our "new, canny" chancellor Gordon Brown bears an uncanny resemblance to actor Ramon Tikaram, who of course plays Ferdy in THIS LIFE, *the "confused" Mexican who doesn't know, er, which way to turn.*

Brothers under the skin? We should be told.

Yours sincerely,
ADAM CAMPBELL,
Edinburgh.

Power point

Sir,

When you criticise the 55 percent thermal efficiency of a power station and that 45 percent of the energy is "wasted", are you aware that the laws of physics prevent any heat engine from being 100 percent efficient? In fact, 55 percent is very high, most power stations have efficiencies in the forties. Belief in 100 percent efficient power stations is akin to belief in perpetual motion.

ALEC CAWLEY,
Newbury, Berks.

Artful dodgem

Sir,

I read the letter from First Leisure's consultant, Brian Crompton, without any amazement at all. As the "sad hack" involved, I would like to make the following points.

My eight-year-old daughter and her friend, aged 10, had to leap from the dodgem car because it was on fire.

The ride operator, who was reading at the time, was alerted to the fire by the girls who ran over to him, screaming.

He poured a bucketful of water over the burning car before offering the girls a free ride in another.

The following day I made requests for statements to various people including the fire service and First Leisure.

Not once did I identify myself as anything but a journalist who had been "told of an alleged incident".

The fire service said they were unaware of any incident, but the following day an officer could find no evidence of the fire.

Brian Crompton, for First Leisure, also reported back and said no such incident had occurred.

As I witnessed the incident, along with my wife, our two children, their friend, and First Leisure staff on the pier, I can only conclude that First Leisure have conspired to cover up the truth.

Mr Crompton accuses me of telling "untruths". Perhaps he should speak to my daughter and her friend who are deeply upset that this "man from the fairground" thinks they too are liars.

Thousands of children will visit Blackpool over the coming weeks. I hope their parents realise what little regard this company has for them.

Yours,
KEVIN MARRINAN,
Manchester.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"... and he would stand there staring at him with his eyes..."

Commentator, BBC
(S.J. Saunders)

"It was the straw that just completely tore her apart..."

Friend of Naomi Campbell, IRN
(David Tinkler)

"Ten years ago, only a third of schoolchildren went on to higher education. Now it is 33 per cent."

Teachers' Spokesman
(Mike Ruscoe)

"If anyone can put a cog in the Germans' wheel, it's Glenn Hoddle."

RAY WILKINS, Sky Sports
(Sara Hobson)

Philip Chapman: *So, what can we expect in this mime performance?*
Artist: *Well, it's a visual show...*

Radio Nottingham
(Revd Jeremy Fletcher)

"Is that a gun in your pocket or am I pleased to see you?"

Postcard from **Belfast**

TWO weekends ago Peter Mandelson was flown into Northern Ireland. Most VIPs (like Bill Clinton) slum it in Belfast's famous Europa Hotel, but Mandy opted for Hillsborough Castle, the queen's official residence in the province, where he was accommodated in rooms every bit as baroque as his own personality.

Aside from a brief tour of the peasantry, Mandelson spent most of his three-day visit cloistered with secretary of state Mo Mowlam or reading security service files on next month's planned all-inclusive, totally peaceful talks. After delivering a reassuring pep talk to Northern Ireland office (NIO) civil servants at Stormont, Mandy then flew back to oversee Labour's great victory at Uxbridge.

Shortly afterwards Andy Wood, the NIO's long-serving information officer, was brutally sacked without warning by Mowlam. His colleagues only realised this when, first, they received an e-mail from Wood saying that he'd been "replaced" and, second, when Mowlam issued a fairly nauseating statement praising the man she'd just fired.

Wood is keeping his head down while a generous compensation package is worked out. Meanwhile hacks have been briefed that Mandelson will soon install Sir Bernard Ingham's former deputy, Romola Christopherson, in Wood's place, although this is obviously a mistake as pre-determining the result of a job which is soon to be advertised for open competition is an offence under the province's fair employment act.

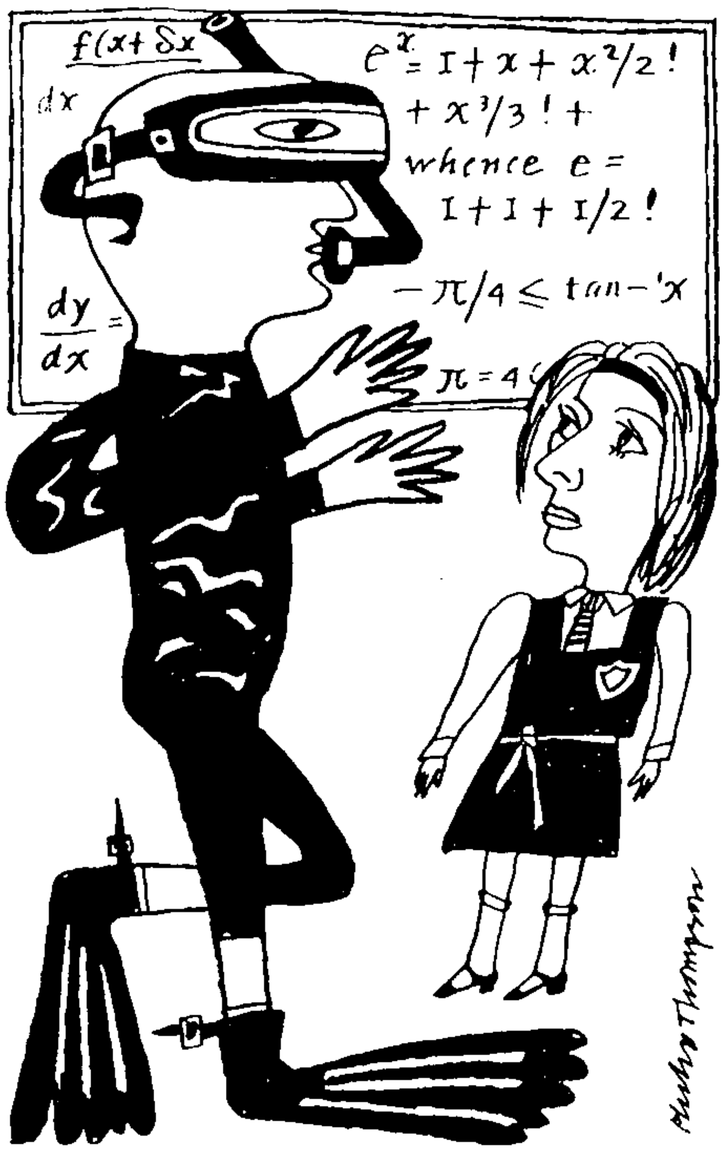
Until Christopherson can be parachuted in from her current base in Whitehall, Mandy will handle media coverage of the next stage of the peace process. This will involve explaining how Sinn Fein gets to participate in talks although the party's most senior members openly boast that they're not handing over any weapons, in spite of Blair's demands. Mandelson's enhanced watching brief suggests Blair lacks complete faith in Mowlam's ability to run the show.

HOM SAP BY DAVID AUSTIN

FUNNY OLD WORLD

"I am technically guilty," Roger Katz, a fifty-year-old teacher at Santa Fe junior high school told the judge in a New Mexico court. "But things are not as they seem, for I was not motivated by lust. I may have broken earthly laws, but that was only because I had to obey the celestial law of Karma.

"Yes, I had an affair with a fourteen-



year-old girl student, but this was not the first time we had met. You see, I first penetrated her in Tibet in 640AD, when I was a teenage monk in a Buddhist monastery, and she was an old woman. She saved my life by taking an arrow out of my chest and sucking out the poison, after I had been attacked by a horseman from a rival religion, so it seemed the decent thing to do. When she turned up in my maths class last semester, I recognized her instantly, and I knew that I had to repay the debt of love and devotion that I had carried with me for fourteen centuries. That is why I booked a motel room and invited her over. I have no idea what the snorkel and flippers were doing in the room. They must have been left there by a previous occupant".

Mr Katz was sentenced to five years imprisonment. *(Wellington Evening Post, 13/5/97. Spotter: Christopher Tennet)*

—o—

"The fans simply cannot accept the way their team performed today," Ha Noi Television's football commentator told his audience. "There were too many strange incidents on the field, and the responsible office has to investigate whether the match was fixed."

The broadcaster's remarks were made shortly after the end of a game between the Ha Noi Police team and An Giang, at the Ha Noi stadium. "Ha Noi Police seemed to be two different teams playing as one, with some players trying to win, while others showed no enthusiasm, or even tried to help the opposition. On four separate occasions, their goalkeeper Do Thanh Ton ran out of the goalmouth towards the centre circle when the opposition had the ball, providing An Giang with clear scoring opportunities. During the second half, the Police attack lost all interest in playing, and refused to shoot at the An Giang goal, even when they were awarded a penalty. And, when the scores were still level in the ninetieth minute, Police captain La Xuan Thang fired the ball towards his own goal while the goalkeeper ran towards the corner flag, thus ensuring that the ball entered an empty net."

After the game, La Xuan Thang told the TV audience "I bear all responsibility for the goal." He then disappeared into hiding, and has not been seen since. *(Viet Nam News, 11/7/97. Spotter: Stephen Jessel)*

—o—

"The less than delightful stench of urine is always at hand to welcome anyone entering this court house," lawyer Robbin Mason told Magistrate Joseph E. Massally in Freetown's Magistrate Court No. 1. "The stink of piss defiles the sacred heart of justice in this country, and I ask for an adjournment until the building has been fumigated and adequate toilet facilities are provided."

Granting the adjournment, Magistrate Massally added his own objections. "The virulent scent of urine has become a permanent feature of the air inhaled in this court. Ever since the building was gutted by fire two years ago, toilet facilities have been no more. Judges, lawyers, litigants, witnesses — we all have to urinate and even defecate into the gutter outside when we wish to ease ourselves, and the sight of a magistrate at stool undermines the dignity of the Law. The overhead electric fans never work in here because of lack of electricity, and I am sick of wearing thick heavy black robes in this heat every day. The court adjourned until further notice." (Freetown [Sierra Leone] English Language Newspaper, 1/3/97. Spotter: David Bemar)

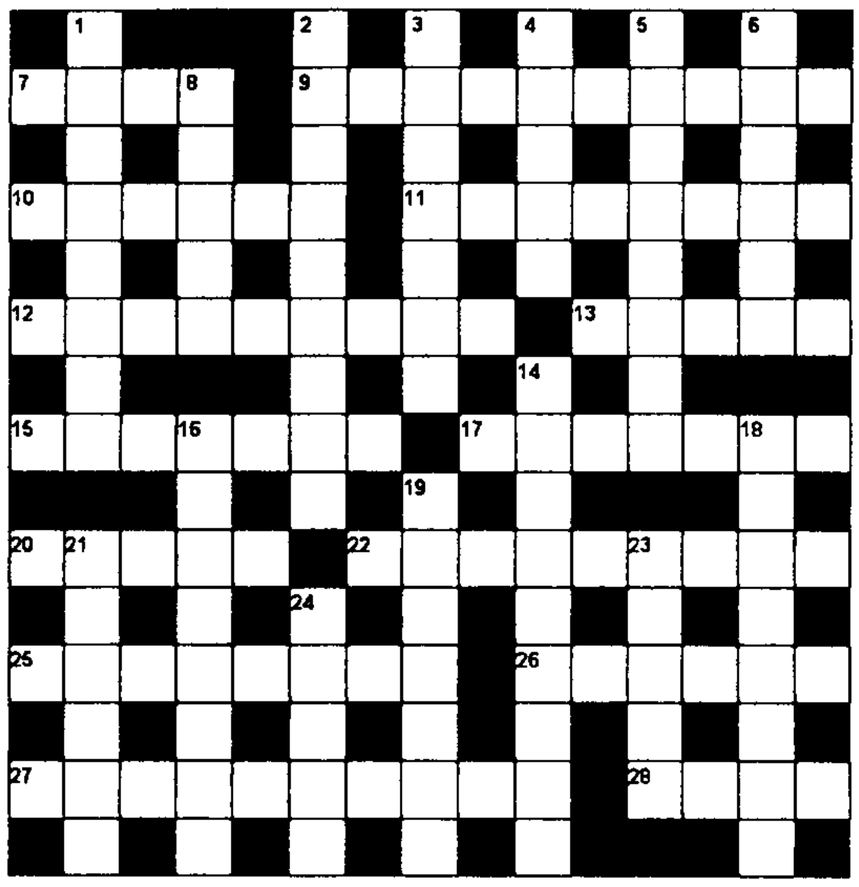
COMPILED BY VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH

The Lottery Winners

TURNER

EYE CROSSWORD 85

by Cyclops — *£100 prize*



ACROSS

7 (see 12)
9 A Tory government scandal when members on a riot interfered with Queen (4,2,4)
10 School's after equipment — cheap and vulgar stuff! (6)
11 Terrorist weapon gets Bough fired up, so it's said (8)
12/7 Lots of muck-raking here, in the *Eye* (4,2,3,4)
13 Liberal parents don't do this sort of heroin? (5)
15 Blimey! Long tv show needed to get one to shut up a politician ...! (7)
17 ... only Frost for recompense (7)
20 On date, poor circulation makes you lose an erection (5)
22 The tosser's deposit holding institution? (5,4)
25 They get talked about, Brenda's people! (8)
26 Clinton's vice: squeezing the thing to produce an abnormal swelling! (6)
27 Much criticism associated with skin protection often seen on Kate's chest (4,6)
28 US agency that sends up people (4)

DOWN

1 Labour's last tv correspondent — just about nothing on — a big turn-off for audiences? (5,3)
2 (see 23)
3 Hey, Pam, time to jiggle, giving good vibrations! (7)
4 Dead wood — ends up a politician,... (5)
5 ... pisspoor PM, first class dolt of an ambassador (8)
6 It's definitely the main Indian dish around (6)
8 Brenda, Brian, relatively speaking, joined a member of society (5)
14 Labour, for this sort of mother, benefits someone else (9)
16 Roger gets up to a prank — Viz-type humour? (4,4)
18 Newt's lot: bonking! (8)
19 What makes Boris pass out over Channel...? (7)
21 ... Russia's ready to get Tory leader out of difficulty (6)
23/2 Shadow minister's brain screwed up in the morning by a nag's outburst, we hear (5,9)
24 Second Conservative horny beast to piss off! (5)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 15.08.97. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 84

Winner: RONNIE SLOAN

ACROSS: 7 Kangaroo 9 T-shirt 10 Bell 11 Two fingers 12/6 How they are related 13 On sale 14 Embrace 16 Y-fronts 15 Upturn 20 Pleated 22 Codswallop 23 (see 1) 25 Piloti 26 Insomnia.

DOWN: 1/23 Kate Moss 2 Crotch 3 Sodomy 4 Strip off 5 Thighs 6 (see 12ac) 8 Gulf War 12 Homophobia 15 Cannabis 17 Optimum 19 Upshot 20 Pelvis 21 Exposé 24 Snip.

TOP SECRET DOCUMENT LEAKED TO PRIVATE EYE

By our Diplomatic Staff **C.D. Plate**

MI6 are to investigate how a top-secret internal memo from the Foreign Office concerning Christopher Patten came into the possession of the magazine *Private Eye*.

The memo (see below) is one of the most sensational documents ever to be leaked in the history of diplomacy.

That Memo In Full

From: M (MI6)
To: Q (MI5)
For your eyes only

Dear "Q",

I have spoken to Lord H. and Baroness T. and we're all in agreement that we must get that bastard Patten for suggesting that we sold Hong Kong down the Yangtze – which of course we did.

Sir Percy C. is particularly miffed because he was made to look an idiot – which he is – but we can't have some journalist going on television and saying that.

So let's do over Patten for breaching the Official Secrets Act: the old Peter Wright treatment.

That'll teach him to mess with the sneaky beakies!

M.

P.S. Did you see Patten blubbing on the TV. What an arse! Pretty girls he's got though – not that that would interest you – or indeed me!

Advertisement

MR BORE

Yes, he's back! Rowan Atkinson **is** Mr Bore in a new full-length adventure in which Mr Bore sets out to make a huge amount of money — and does!

Laugh along with Mr Bore as

- *He pockets millions of pounds from foreign sales in Belarusse!*
- He visits his accountant to discuss his investments!
- *He lunches with advertising men to talk over huge fees for the new Barclaycard advertisement!*
- He phones his agent to organise full-length TV documentary plug for himself!!

And wherever he goes — money is sure to follow in his wake!

Now showing at the following Gnomeon cinemas:
The Classikos, Thessalonika The Odeon, Calabria The Trocadero, Osaka Screen on Goose Green, The Falklands
And on all flights to everywhere for the next 100 years

You can't escape Mr Bore!

New Foreign Office Ethical Guidelines

Part 94: Dealing with Uganda

Ugandan Affairs are extremely complicated and it is inappropriate to apply any hard and fast rules when dealing with this state. Negotiations should be conducted in camera (or in handy ministerial love nest close to the House of Commons), not on the front page of the *News of the World*.

Signed

Mr Robin Cock

We apologise for the mis-spelling of Mr Cock's name in the above article. It should of course have read 'Mr Fook'.

We apologise for the mis-spelling of Mr Fook's name in the above apology. It should of course have read Mr 'Cook-Up'. *(That's enough corrections. Ed)*

QUEEN MOTHER TO BE RELAUNCHED BY PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

By **Victoria Britannia**

ONE of Britain's proudest Royal possessions, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, is to be refitted and leased out to private companies for promotional and recretional purposes.

Said a spokesman: "She has been a symbol of Britain for nearly a century but the cost of keeping her afloat is prohibitive in today's market economy."

He continued: "What we are proposing is a viable leaseback timeshare option where the Queen Mother is available for corporate hospitality both here and abroad.

"A number of companies have already expressed interest in purchasing a share of the Queen Mother, including Gordon's, Beefeater, Gilbey's, Ladbrokes, William Hill, Cadburys and Hats'n'Handbags'R'Us of Beauchamp Place.

New TV series

The Not Very Crafty Cook

Take one game bird. Stuff her. Leave wife to simmer. Serves you right.

More recipes for disaster tomorrow.

© *R. Cook*

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam William Burroughs, Great American Writer

So. Farewell
Then
William S.
Burroughs.

"The Naked Lunch".
Yes.
That was your
Masterpiece.

Keith thought it
Was a cookbook
For nudists

And gave it
To his Auntie.

But she said
She could
Not get the
Hang of

The recipes.

Eric "J." Thribb (17½)

P.S. This poem was written under the influence of a hallucinatory salmon and shrimp sandwich and strikes me as the most brilliant one I have written in my entire life.

TV Highlights

The Ruth Rendell Mystery

A middle-aged woman quietly living in Suffolk writing detective novels suddenly wakes up to discover that she has turned into a life peeress. Who did it? And what was the motive? The finger points at the glamorous Tony Blair, a former lawyer whose advances to another woman called Delia have been turned down. Don't miss this inexplicable drama.

Eye Rating: *Watch Channel 5.*

THAT TORY 'BONDING' WEEKEND IN FULL

by Our Political Staff **Sid and Boris Johnson**

THE following top-secret memo has been leaked to Private Eye by a highly placed source within Tory Central Office.

It sets out in stark detail Tory leader William Hague's top-secret plan to revitalise his ailing party, and to win the next election by a Blair-style landslide.

CONSERVATIVE CENTRAL OFFICE
SMITH SQUARE, SW1

To: All Conservative Members of Parliament (For Your Eyes Only)
From: W. Hague, Team Leader

Day One

0930 hrs. Assemble in reception of Thorneycroft Country Hotel, Aylesbury, Bucks.

0940 hrs. Goals and Visions: Seminar led by Simon Kumquat, Project Director, ASDA Supermarket Group.

1100 hrs. Coffee and Biscuits.

1115 hrs. The Mission Statement. Liz Yoghurt, Marketing Director Yog-U-Like (UK), defines the parameters of building a viable corporate identity.

1200-1500 hrs. Buffet Lunch.

1500 hrs. Problem-Solving Exercise with Lt-Col Philip de Nutter of the Parachute Regiment. Teams will be required to cross an imaginary river, using only a copy of the Daily Telegraph and a box of matches.

1600 hrs. Team-Building Line Dancing with "Big Tex" Homecare of the Texas Homecare Dance Experience (Basingstoke).

1700 hrs. The Day So Far. MPs will split into focus groups to engage in frank assessment of the effectiveness of the training sessions to date, led by Dick Swatch, managing director of management consultants Swatch Switch.

1800 hrs. MPs go into bar to get pissed and discuss what a waste of time the whole day has been and what a hopeless squit Hague is. *(Surely some mistake? Ed.)*

MELLOR'S TASK FORCE — NEASDEN GIVES VERDICT

By **E.I. Erewego**, Our Man In The Stands With A Complimentary Ticket To The Proms For A Concert Of Works By Wet Wet Wet, Bon Jovi And Bucks Fizz

THE soccer world was rocked to its foundations yesterday when it was announced that a former Tory MP has been given the job of New Labour's Mr Football. From midnight, David Mellor will be in charge of a Task Force designed to rid the game of racism, create better access for the disabled and, in short, generally clean up the national game.

But the reaction of both the fans and club officials to the government's plans were mixed. At Neasden Bridge, ashen-faced supremo Ron Knee, 57, spoke out fiercely against the appointment. "We already have a strict policy on racism," he said. "Blacks and Asians can't come in."

Mellor stripped for action

Freebie Kick

"What is more," the tight-lipped manager continued, "you can hardly say Neasden ignores the disabled. We have fielded a one-legged net minder for half a century. And in the event of an opponent finding they are unable to walk unaided following one of Baldie Pevsner's professional fouls, I always give them the number of the local mini cab company who will help to get them home."

Toe Punt

However, Neasden fans (Sid & Doris Bonkers) were clearly delighted by Mellor's arrival. "He is most definitely one of us," said Sid. "A right bastard. His record speaks for itself. First he gets off by sucking some tart's toe, then he ditches his poor wife and kiddies for some rich bird with a title and then sells shooters to the Arabs." Agreeing with her husband, Doris added: "If he doesn't do for football what he did for the Tory Party, then my name isn't Lady Antonia de Sancha."

Ron Knee is 59.

LATE SCORE

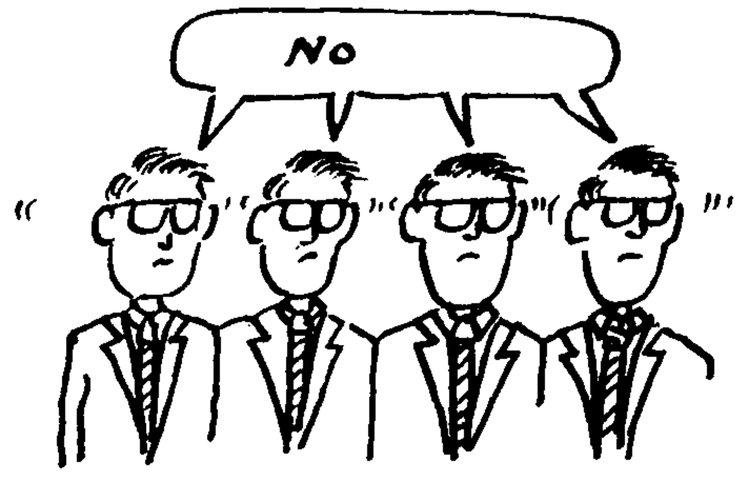
Pre Season Friendly

AFC Neasden 0
Arsenal 0

(Game abandoned after two minutes when all 22 players were given red cards)

Late Neasden Deadline Signings

Erik Bådli-Injuredstrøm (Karelia Old Boys) midfield; Tot Ali Uzlez (ESP Tashkent) striker; Tanto Crappi (Vafanculo) sweeper and washer-up.



Yes-Men Behaving Badly

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo!

This week I write to you all more in sorrow than in anger (though I am a bit angry, to be honest!).

A number of the older members of our congregation have been having a go at me behind my back, I gather!

I'm not going to mention names, but Mr Hattersley, Mr Benn and Mrs Castle may know who I am talking about!

They say apparently that since I came to St Albion's, I've been making too many changes too quickly, and watering down our traditional beliefs, to try and widen our appeal.

Quite honestly, I can't see what's wrong with that!

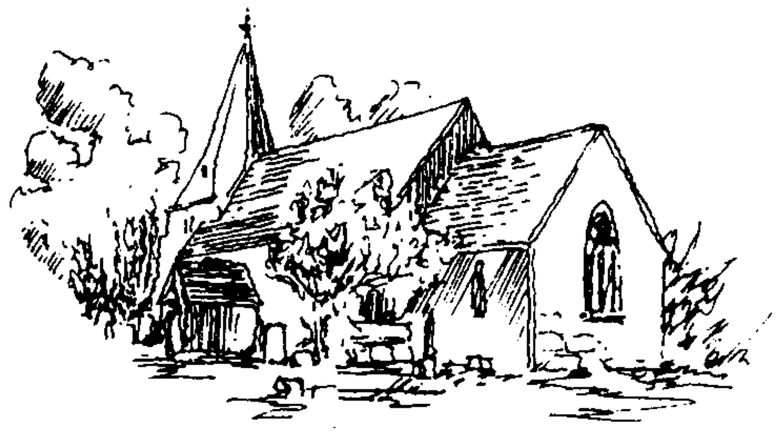
I can take criticism as well as the next man, but I'm not going to accept this sort of thing from a lot of people who, frankly, got very little done when they tried to organise things their way!

I think a little humility from them wouldn't come amiss *(John 8.23)*, don't you!

And if they want any proof of just how much better things are at St Albion's these days, they should have come to the wine-and-cheese evening Cherie and I gave at the vicarage last week for some of the young people of the parish!

I tell you, it was a joy to see all those enthusiastic, eager young faces, all keen to do their bit for St Albion's!

There were young people of all colours and creeds, and even one delightful young



man called Eddie who came in a dress!

Some of them brought their guitars and I brought mine out for an impromptu "sing-song session"!

We even sung a little chorus I had written myself for the occasion which went:

"There's a new dawn tomorrow,
There's a new day today.
There's a new mood at St Albion's
Let's all keep it that way!
Alleluia, alleluia (repeat)"

Some of the older parishioners might learn something from the words of that song, including those who saw fit to criticise David Simon, the manager of the local petrol station, who has been giving so freely of his time to helping us out.

Look, just because David is quite a rich man, that doesn't mean there's no place for him in our outreach team!

Don't we all remember the story of the rich young man who offered his services free of charge to Our Lord?

And what did Our Lord say? He told him in so many words to give away all his money (i.e. put it in a "blind trust"), and then he could come on board.

And while on the subject of how rich men have a very special contribution to make to the Kingdom of Heaven, Cherie and I would just like to thank Mr Robinson of Granada Rentals for so generously having us to stay at his villa in Tuscany!

We are really looking forward to our fortnight's break in the Italian sun, and I leave it up to you to decide whether it is well earned or not!

As they say over there,
Ciao!

Tony

SAY GORGONZOLA! (Italian for cheese)

FROM THE CHURCHWARDEN

As of today, I am introducing a new Code of Conduct for all members of the PCC. In future everyone will be expected to act in every respect beyond reproach. We cannot afford to have any more incidents which will bring Tony or St Albion's into disrepute. I will be personally keeping a close eye on everyone, to make sure that their personal and public conduct is "squeaky clean"! Anyone who infringes on the Code of Conduct may find forgiveness a bit thin on the ground. (There will however be exceptions! T.B.)

Copies of the Code will be given out with coffee after this week's Evensong. Be there.

PM

To Remember In Your Prayers

Robin and Margaret Cook who have suffered a personal tragedy. This is of course entirely a matter for them and the last thing I should be doing as vicar is to start preaching. None of us want to be judgemental about what is a private affair. Let's hope all three of them come to terms with their new situation. And let's hear no criticism of Robin in the meantime.

T.B.

++++++"NO WAY!" ++++++ TO NEW CHURCH DRIVE

by Mr J. Prescott, Working Men's Club

I am sure all you Green-minded folk will be pleased to know that we have decided to scrap plans to turn the footpath past the church into a proper vehicular road. I know this would have given better access to the church for drivers, but the vicar and I feel that the environment must come first.

We all have to do our bit to save the planet! And anyway we should all use public transport whenever we can and leave our bloody cars at home! I agree it is a pity that the 197 Stagecoach bus doesn't run on Sundays, but a good long walk will do us all a power of good. *(Especially you, John! TB)*

JP

Situations Vacant

■ The vicar is very concerned about the increase in drug-taking among young people in the parish. He would like a volunteer to act as the St Albion's "Drug Czar" to really get to grips with this problem in a meaningful way, because it is so serious. Apply by phone or fax to the Vicarage.

Notices

● Mrs Harman's Focus Group will be meeting on Wednesday to give the women of the parish a bigger say in how the parish is run. *(About time too! TB.)*

● We are already planning a very special service in the proposed Millennium Marquee to mark the 2000th anniversary of Jesus's birth. It will be a multi-faith service, with Muslims, Jews and Hindus especially welcome! Any more ideas for our Millennium Experience, please, to Mr Mandelson.

ST ALBION'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE GOVERNORS, MR BLUNKETT

All parents will be expected to turn up to the School Hall on Tuesday to sign their new "Reading Contracts", guaranteeing 20 minutes of quality reading experience for each pupil every day. Failure to comply will result in immediate expulsion, a hefty fine or even long term imprisonment.

DB

RADIO BORE

The Today Programme

Jim Naughtie: And now the national and international news with Brian Perkins.

Perky: Easily the most important thing happening in the world today will be the announcement by Mr James Boyle of the radical changes in the Radio 4 schedule. Details of the changes have been kept a closely guarded secret, but the BBC has learned that the changes will be announced to the nation by Mr Boyle at 10.15 this morning.

Mr Boyle's announcement will bring to an end months of fevered speculation which has had the entire country talking about very little else.

Among the main questions to be answered by Mr Boyle, the head of Radio 4, will be whether the *Today* programme should begin earlier; whether *Does He Take Sugar?* is to be moved to a new afternoon slot; whether the five-minutes-to-two shipping forecast will be moved to 3.35; and whether the long-running *Call Ed Stourton Show* is to be axed altogether.

An extended exclusive interview with Mr Boyle will be broadcast immediately after this news.

And now the rest of the news. In Israel thousands died when some bomb went off. Some blonde woman seems to have murdered someone. The New Labour government is up to various things. And half of Germany seems to have disappeared underwater.

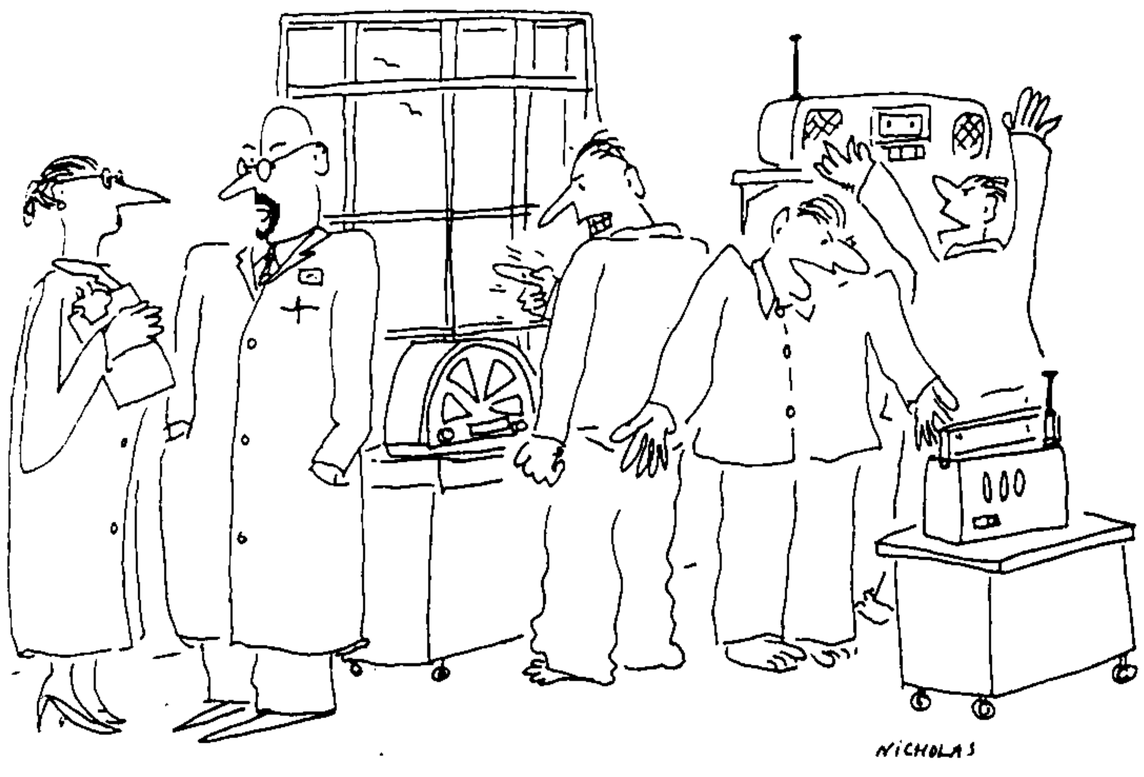
Naughtiebutnice: And now we are very privileged to have in the studio my boss, Mr James Bore. Mr Bore, can you tell us what it is you're going to announce to the world later this morning about your radical plans for New Radio 4?

Bore: Certainly not. It would be quite improper for me to pre-empt my own very important announcement by telling Radio 4 listeners what is going to happen to their programmes.

Naughtiebutnotquitesonice: But is it true to say that what you are planning is a "dumbing-down" of Radio Four?

Bore: How dare you use such a tasteless and inaccurate term to describe my innovative and frankly brilliant decision to shift the lunchtime *Archers* to 2 o'clock? One more question like that and you're fired.

Naughtiebutsuddenlysweetaspie: Gosh, sir, I'm sorry. Thank you very much for coming in. It has been a great honour to have you on the show. And now *Thought for the Day* from the Rt. Rev. Jim Wheelbarrow, Bishop of Neasden.



"This is the secure ward for men who argue with radios"

Wheelbarrow: You know, when we hear of all these amazing changes at Radio 4, don't we all think: "Oh dear, I'm not sure about this"? But then we have a little pause for reflection. And we realise that change is always painful. And in the end we realise that it is the right thing after all, and we're very grateful that we've been shaken out of our old complacency.

Humphrys: Thank you, Bishop Jim. And now a summary of the news from Brian Perky.

Pinky: In an extraordinary interview on this programme, the man at the centre of the world's most important news story exclusively revealed that he was unable to say anything at all...

(This continues for several hours until finally, at 10.15am, a man in a suit and glasses announces some minor adjustments to the scheduling of Woman's Hour and the format of the Melvyn Barg Talk Show...)

Later on The World at One

Nick Clarke: And now we are going over live for an exclusive interview with the world's most famous and important man, Mr James Bore.

Bore: Look, you see, all the press were wrong. I didn't sack Alastair Cooke, I did move the time of the *Morning Service* and I haven't made a decision on *Yesterday in Parliament*. That just shows how stupid all the journalists are.

Clarke: And how clever you are?

Bore: Precisely. I've commissioned a huge amount of research through focus groups and deliberative polling, to discover why so many people switch off Radio Four at about 9 o'clock in the morning and don't switch on again until around 6pm.

Clarke: It's because they go to work, isn't it?

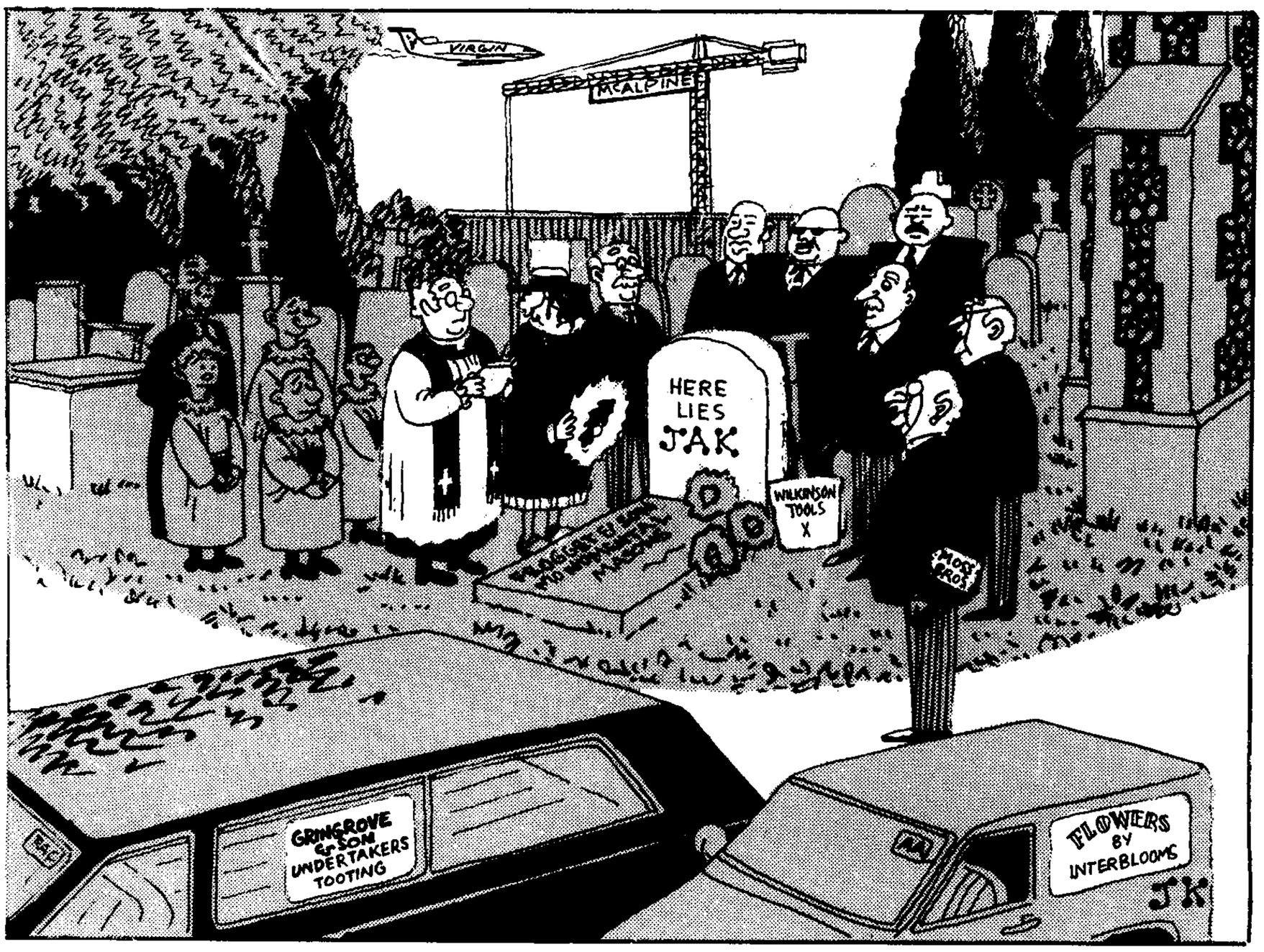
Bore: You're fired.

Other programmes on today's Radio 4

Sport On Four: Cliff Morgan interviews David Gower about the new changes to Radio 4.

The Archers: Conversation at the Bull turns to the big talking point of the moment, the radical changes down at Radio 4 and the move of Farming Today from 6.10am to 5.51am.

Book At Bedtime: James Bore reads extracts from his New Radio Four schedule and sends nation to sleep.



JAK is dead

POL JOHNSON FOUND

by Our Cambodia Staff **Lu Ne Binh**

A PATHETIC old man with white hair and a red face was put on show in the *Daily Mail* yesterday, after being tracked down in the dense verbiage of the *Spectator*.

Those who have seen him are convinced that he is the notorious Pol Johnson, the man who bored millions of people to death in the space of one afternoon.

Khmer Rouge Face

Now 85, Pol Potty became world-famous in the 1970s as one of the great mass-journalists of all time, often despatching up to 50,000 words in less than an hour.

A hard-line lunatic, Johnson was feared by all who opened a newspaper, and the public lived in terror of being confronted by one of his fearsome diatribes on the collapse of civilisation as we know it.

Today Pol's thoughts are confused and his mind rambles incoherently on any subject that comes into it.

As one long-time observer put it: "Nothing has changed."

Pol Potty is 106.

Yes! It's Britain's Newest Fanzine

BLAIRZONE

Party... Party... Party...

Hey! It's my party, and I'll drink chardonnay if I want to! It's no secret that me and some mates from the music biz chilled out the other night at my pad and got down to some serious misbehavin' — safe sex, worrying about the drug problem and rock'n'roll!!! Well all ri-i-i-i-ight!!!

Here's me and Noel (Gallagher) trading guitar licks, groupie stories and experiences of buying and selling houses in the North London property market — crazy or what?!

But me and Noel have more in common than just rebel rock'n'roll lifestyles. Oasis got a lot of their best ideas from another band. And so did we! The Beatles, the Conservatives — we've all got our roots. No shame, man (or woman).

And another thing. Noel hates his brother. And I hate all the brothers — in the words of the late great David Cousins of the Strawbs (from the "Grave New World" era), "You don't get me, I'm not part of the union".

Anyway, Yours, "Mad for it", Tony (lead singer of Blairzone)

Tony's Top No. 10 Oasis Faves

Champagne Socialist Supernova

What's the Story? Morning Tory

All My People Right Wing Right Now (D'ya Know What I Mean?)

Let It Be

Wonderwalworth Road

Tony's thought for the Housing Crisis:

"We all live in a yellow submarine." Think about it!

Axe Fax

Tony's all-time ace pummel-planks (guitars)

1. Fender Superstratos 69 with galvanized head and mega fuzz-box.
2. Mandelson Focuswopper 97 with total controls and super-smooth glide knob.
3. 24-string double-head left-handed bass-rate Stirling Meister with full back pedals, as played by Chris Squire of Yes (post-Anderson/Bruford/Squire/Wakeman/Howe and pre-Squire/Wakeman/Anderson/Howe/Kaye days obviously).

Harry Enfield's **Bores** Drawn by **Michael Heath** **18. The Actor**

"I never read the critics they're all a bunch of halfwits they're frustrated actors who haven't got the talent or the brains to do our job I mean what right have they got to judge us? I wouldn't demean myself by reading their drivel how DARE Michael Billington say my performance made him chuckle does he have ANY BLOODY IDEA how hard I worked at my New York accent & does he CARE? NO HE BLOODY DOESN'T! It's not worth getting angry about that would be giving his toilet paper credit it doesn't deserve I'd like to see him BLOODY TRY getting up on stage I've given up reading papers all critics should be shot they're scum & if Michael Bloody Billington's so right how come the Times said I was 'Spellbinding' & the Mail 'Spot on the mark' & the Telegraph 'Chillingly authentic' & the Express 'Spine-chillingly brilliant' & the Standard 'Commanding total audience attention' HUH? Oh no! Mr Billington knows best I only respect the opinions of my peers now BAFTA is an honourable organisation I was nommed last year but got pipped by John Thaw bloody ludicrous decision by a panel of morons still I beat him for Best Actor at the London Critics awards unlike Bafta they don't think Thaw's God just because he played Morse I don't do tellies I wouldn't demean myself I so nearly got the part of Victor in "One Foot in the Grave" I was described at the London Critics Award as "The finest actor of my generation" by Michael Billington at least there are *some* intelligent critics left I think I'll invite him to the launch of my autobiography..."

Summer Holiday Story — From The Gatwick Collection

LONDON BELONGS TO ME

A **GODFREY BOWMAN** Adventure
by Masterstoryteller **JEFFREY ARCHER**

FROM his penthouse flat looking out over the world-famous River Thames, the svelte, sun-tanned, handsome, Savile-Row-suited, very rich figure of Godfrey Bowman gazed down over the heart of England's capital city, London.

From Hammersmith in the East to Tower Bridge way out to the West, the story was the same.

Three long months of Socialist rule had reduced the world's greatest city to a seedy, rat-infested slum.

How very different from the £2 million view of the Post Office Tower by the world-famous French artist Gustave Monet, which hung in place of honour above the leather-bound set of first editions of Bowman's own best-selling novels.

In the streets below him the new cries of London could be heard — "Can you spare some change, guv?", "Buy a Big Issue, Mister?", "Is this the way to Shepherds Market?"

The people of London had never known such a dark time since the famous Blitz of 1948 or the Great Plague of 1923 *(please check)*.

And now, it seemed, final disaster threatened.

An unscrupulous Communist politician, known to his followers as 'Red Ken', was said to be back in town, plotting revolution.

It wouldn't be long before the once-proud city fell under the brutal heel of this fanatical Socialist dictator, known for his charming habit of torturing his collection of pet newts.

It was a nightmare vision...

"IT IS a nightmare vision, Lord Bowman. And there is only one man in my kingdom who can avert catastrophe."

"Who is that speaking?" Bowman barked.

"It is Her Majesty the Queen, Lord Bowman. And I have a mission for you."

"At your service, Ma'am," purred Bowman, flexing his SAS-trained muscles in readiness to carry out the regal command.

His loyalty was absolute, drummed into him by long years on the playing fields of Eton, the quadrangles of Oxbridge University and at Sandhurst, where he had passed out with the Sword of Honour in the same year that he won the 100 Metres Gold Medal for Britain at the Olympic Games.

"Your great achievements for this country are not forgotten," said the Queen, as if reading his thoughts.

"But now an even greater task awaits you. Turn again, Bowman, Lord Mayor of London..."

THE BELLS of St Paul's Abbey were ringing out. They could be heard from Muswell Hill in the South to Tooting Bec in the North. Never had so many Londoners jammed the streets of their beloved City, to cheer one man as he emerged on the balcony of Buckingham House, Her Majesty the Queen radiant at his side.

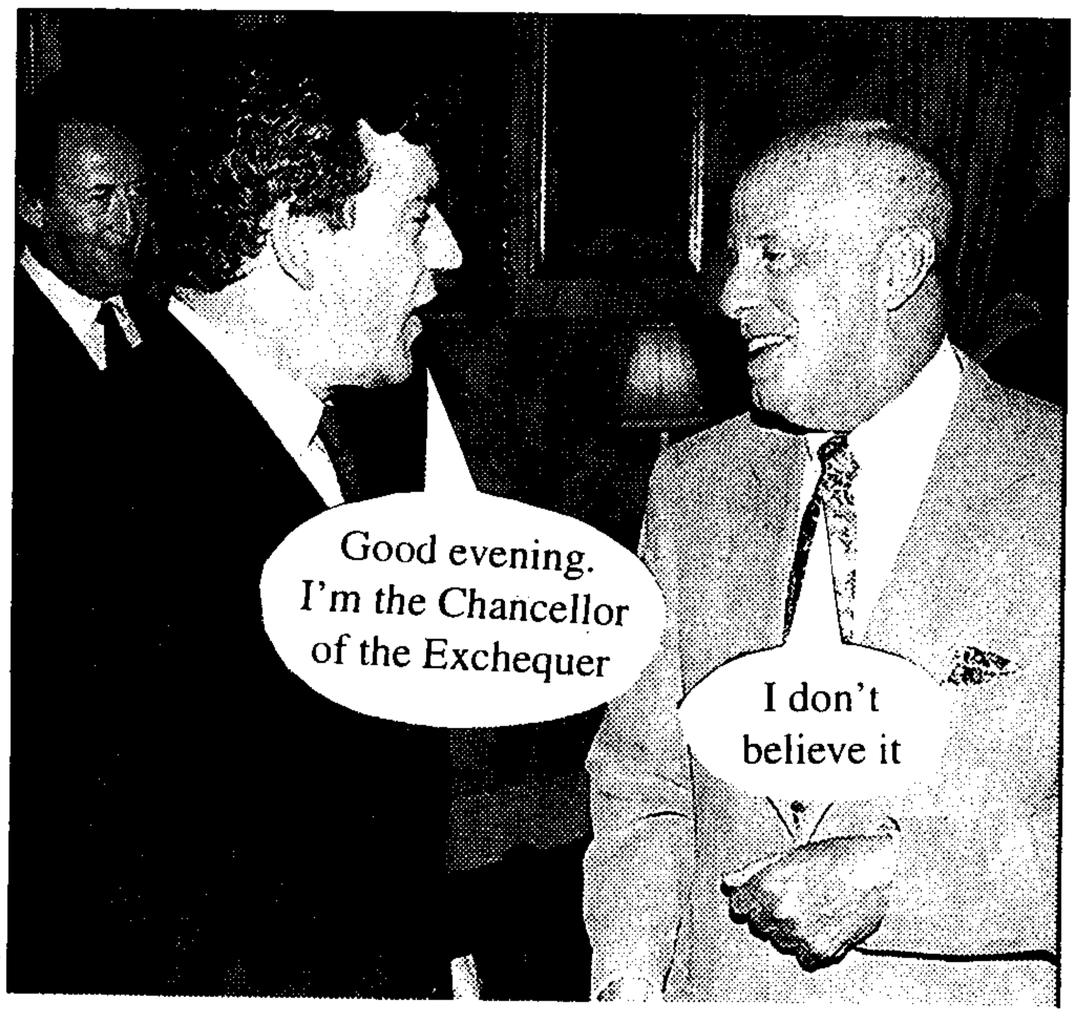
The Red Arrows display team flashed overhead, leaving a purple smoke trail which proclaimed the joyous message: VIVAT BOWMAN — THE PEOPLE'S MAYOR.

Few people noticed the Black Maria threading its way slowly through the throng.

Cowering in the back was the pitiful moustachioed figure of Red Ken, the hated Stalinist traitor, as he was driven to lifelong incarceration in the famous Tower of Windsor.

The crowd roared their delight, for they knew their city was saved.

© *Lord Archole of Weston-super-Toseeyou*



KNIGHTSBRIDGE MAN IN GERMAN FLOOD RESCUE DASH

by Our Floods Staff **Lunchtime O'Der**

RELIEF is in sight for the millions of Germans who have been left homeless by catastrophic floods.

Last night it was announced that Harrods owner Mr Mohamed Al-Fayed had chartered a fleet of jumbo jets to airlift millions of tonnes of "an absorbent material" claimed to be "a hundred times more effective than the conventional sandbags" to be dropped into the stricken area of Silesia.

Said Mr Al-Fayed, "Tests have shown that just one copy of *Punch* can soak up a hundred litres of floodwater, and I am going to drop billions of them."

Deutschland Unter Wasser

Mr Fayed hopes that the operation will create a network of huge dams millions of miles high, thus preventing any further flooding for a thousand years.

But there have been protests from German environmental groups, complaining that the magazine was "not funny".

"We may have no sense of humour," said one flood victim from his rooftop, "but this is beyond a joke."

BLAIR HONEYMOON OVER — IT'S OFFICIAL

by Our Political Staff **Des Perate**

YES — New Labour's honeymoon with the British electorate is finished.

For three months it seemed that Blair's babes could do no wrong.

But now the worm has turned. The chickens have come home to roost. The champagne has gone flat. It is the morning after the night before.

Today they are calling them Blair's boobies.

Last night, in a sensational interview on Radio Didcot's *Good Evening South Oxfordshire* programme, Labour's former Deputy-Leader Lord Hattersley told local DJ Donny Dennis that: "Tony Blair has made a good start but there is still a long way to go before we achieve real equality in this country."

Lord Hattersley then retired to a 4-Star local French restaurant, Le Petit Didcot, where he ate the following 15-course meal:

- 2 Douzaines Escargots de Harwell in Chives and Garlic Sauce.
- 2 Douzaines Sirloin Steaks Provencales (slightly raw).

(That's enough Hattersley menu. Ed.)

10 Telltale Signs That New Labour's Honeymoon Is Finished

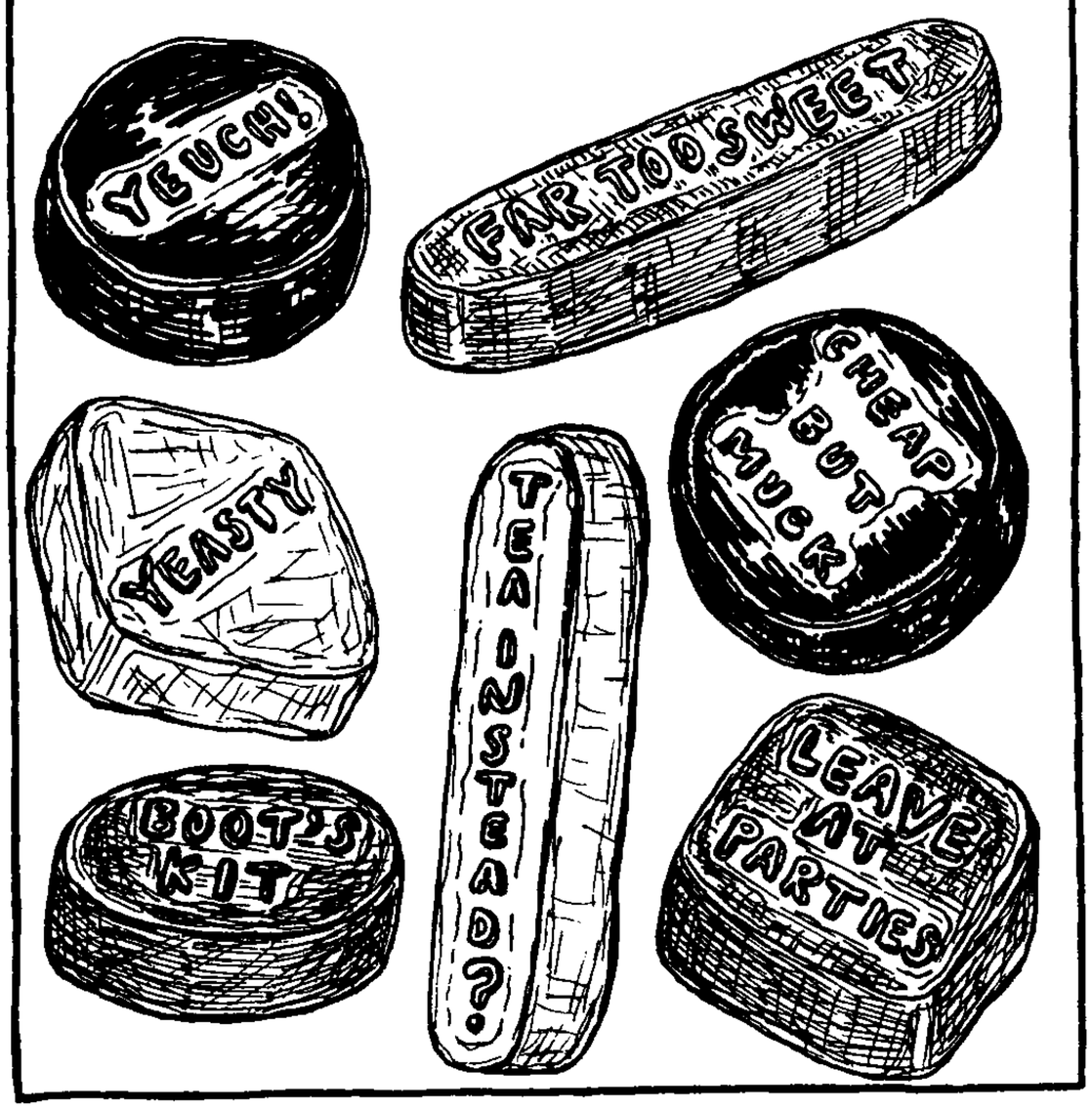
1. England lose Test Match.
2. Shearer injured.
3. Strong pound rocks high streets.
4. House prices soar.
5. Skin cancer fears as Britons roast in Mediterranean-style sunshine.
6. Poland and Germany sink under flood waters.
7. Conservatives take safe Conservative seat in Uxbridge by-election.
8. MORI Poll indicates only 98% of public think Mr Blair is "wonderful".
9. Er...
10. That's it.

This article appeared in yesterday's paper and will appear again in tomorrow's paper and the day after's until New Labour's honeymoon really *is* over.

CHAPLAIN
half-time
Warren Pearl is a 21 bed Hospice providing impatient care, day care and home care for patients with life threatening illness.

Apparently ... BY MIKE BARFIELD

HOMEMADE WINE-GUMS



TEENAGER ABDUCTED BY SCHEMING OLDER WOMAN

by Our News Staff **Phil Space**

THE Yorkshire teenager William Squitt, 14, returned to Britain today claiming that he had been "taken for a ride" by a much older married woman.

Squitt told waiting reporters: "She took me over completely. She was much more experienced than me, and I couldn't say no."

Squitt, 16, came to know Mrs Margaret Thatcher (whose name has been withheld for legal reasons) when she picked him up at a Conservative Party conference.

"You are the one for me," she said. "I have had my eye on you for a long time."

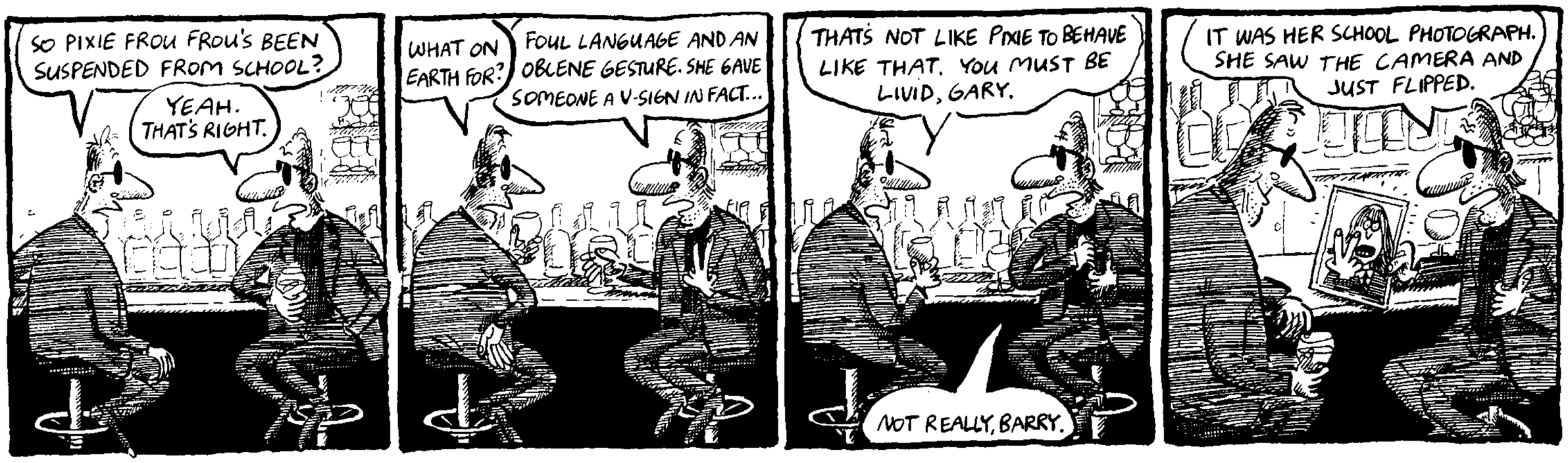
"The next thing I knew," he said, "was that I was leader of the Tory Party."

Young William's mother, Mrs Ludmilla Squitt, said last night: "We will not be pressing charges against Mrs Thatcher. She is just a sad, pathetic woman who is no longer responsible for her actions."

William Squitt is 15.

Celeb

LIGGER


SO PIXIE FROU FROU'S BEEN SUSPENDED FROM SCHOOL?
YEAH. THAT'S RIGHT.
WHAT ON EARTH FOR?
FOUL LANGUAGE AND AN OBLENE GESTURE. SHE GAVE SOMEONE A V-SIGN IN FACT...
THAT'S NOT LIKE PIXIE TO BEHAVE LIKE THAT. YOU MUST BE LIVID, GARY.
NOT REALLY, BARRY.
IT WAS HER SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPH. SHE SAW THE CAMERA AND JUST FLIPPED.

DIARY

I Gotta Tell You Something

I gotta tell you something
I gotta tell you something
I gotta tell you something
I can't stop repeating myself
I gotta tell you something
At least it makes my poems longer
I gotta tell you something
But not really much stronger
I gotta tell you something
But
Wot?

Places I Took Drugs Last Week

Brighton and Chichester
And
Islington and Manchester
And
Guildford and Torquay
And
Glasgow and Stoke Newington
And
Somewhere else ending in "ewington"
Oh yes and Newcastle-under-Lyme
Magic! — a rhyme.

What a Larf

What a LARF
Oh, what a LARF
To see me modelling dark brown
crushed velevet knickerbockers
Over a full colour page of
The Daily
Tele-GRARF

The Death of Versace

If they'd gone for Issey Miyake
That'd have been miz-y, not larky
And if they'd poisoned Giorgio Armani
I'd've said they were ohso barmi
If they'd strangled Yves St Laurent
Christ, it would've been dead bore-ent
If they'd stabbed Calvin Klein
That would have been a bloody crime
If they'd set fire to Vivienne Westwood
I'd've said they were up to no good
And if they'd throttled David Emanuel
That would have been pretty good hell
If they'd smothered John Galliano

MURRAY LACHLAN YOUNG

I'd have said "Oh no!"
If they'd set fire to Alexander
McQueen
That would have been really quite
McMean
And if they'd run over Karl Lagerfeld
I'd have said it was a bit
below-the-belt
But the death of Gianni Versace?
In two words — realli naste.

Sex

My agent said, "What rhymes with SEX?"
So I said:
Vex rhymes with SEX
Necks rhymes with SEX
Hex rhymes with SEX
Pecks rhymes with SEX
Lex rhymes with SEX
Decks rhymes with SEX
Rex rhymes with SEX
Wrecks rhymes with SEX
and
Tex rhymes with SEX
But mainly
SEX
Rhymes with SEX.
My agent said, "Great!
So let's have a poem called
SEX
Nex(t)
Oh, yex!"

Young Murray Was A Simple Bloke

Young Murray was a simple bloke
He wore tight pants, enjoyed a smoke
Hung around in clubs and bars
With guys and gals, not mas and pas
One day when he was twenty-seven
He thought, "Twould be very heaven
If I could be a recording artiste
Yes, that would be the very smartiste
Thing I could possibly do
Yeah, yeah, yeah, wooh! wooh! wooh!"
But then he found he could not croon
He could not drum, he knew no tune
His keyboards stank, his woodwind
shat,
His vocals always sounded flat
His guitar failed to suit him well
So he thought — "Oh what the hell
I'll be a pop-star after all
Like John and Ringo, George and Paul
There's one way to make my mark:
I'll look poetic, tall and dark
Give my shirt a little iron —
Then I'll be the modern Byron!"
Young Murray went to EMI
"Yes, we're in a mood to buy"
They announced, "But — oh curses! —
Don't a poet need some verses?
Why not write some here and now
And then we'll hand you 250 thou"
So Young Murray sits in his chair:
Ten minutes on — the poems are there!
All on subjects the company ordered:
Cocaine, sex both clean and sordid
Men called Tarquin, pop-stars, parties
Mixing with the arty-farties,
Even a poem called Supermodel —
Writing poems — worra doddle!
August comes, the CDs on sale —
Hail, Young Murray! Young Murray,
hail!
Other poets get dead jealous —
Serves them right, outdated fellas!
Yeats and Larkin, Seamus Hea-nee
Never made it on MT-Vee,
They don't know how to write a poem
Leave it to Murray Lachlan Young to
show-em!

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

FASHION CAFE OFFICE
NAOMI, DO YOU THINK IT WAS RIGHT TO FIRE THAT BARMAID FOR BEING PREGNANT?
YES CLAUDIA. SHE WAS FAT AND COULDN'T FIT INTO OUR UNIFORM T-SHIRT.
WE'LL JUST REPLACE HER WITH SOMEONE GLAMOROUS AND FASHIONABLE, WHO DOESN'T WANT BABIES.
DON'T YOU FEEL LIKE A COLD-HEARTED BITCH?
YES. WE SHOULD START ADVERTISING FOR ONE.

THE acrimonious dispute which reduced Heathrow to chaos yesterday took a dramatic twist last night.
British Airways revealed that 500 new recruits were being trained to take over from striking airline cabin staff and a further 3,000 were waiting in the wings.

Daily Mail

BRIAN Glover, who has died from a brian tumour at the age of 63, was an man of many parts: actor, writer, one-time wrestler and teacher.

Grauniad

Literary Review

(Don't) Get Carter

Shaking a Leg: Collected Journalism and Writings
Angela Carter,
ed. Jenny Uglow
(Chatto & Windus, £16.99)

JUST as some reviewers' disgust and indignation sets the bookstore tills ringing carillons, the praise of others makes one dubious about handing over one's money. Angela Carter, writes Roz Kaveney in the *New Statesman*, "was a thinking British socialist feminist at a time when it was considered on all sides hard to be any of those things, let alone all four at once."

Kaveney makes it immediately clear that Carter is meat and drink for the self-aggrandising. Similarly, Blake Morrison (one of two of Carter's commissioning editors solicited for their views) calls her, in the language of marketing rather than criticism, "a great and indispensable talent" (Angela Carter! You'll wonder how you ever got along without her!)

One proof of her greatness, it seems, is that "more postgraduate theses are being written about Angela Carter than about any other writer from Britain or perhaps the world". It's more likely that it measures simply the dissertators' confidence in discussing an author of feminist fairy tales — they know that, when their sensitivity to language runs out, they can turn to psychology and sociology.

But will anyone else see these pieces, mostly from *New Society* in the 70s, as the gems of cultural criticism that Carter's admirers do? Or might they remain unmoved by her *kaffeeklatsch* manner, with its chatty asides ("Speaking of hair", "for reasons I won't bore you with"), artless profanity ("I was scared shitless the first time I went to the East End"), and clumsy use of dated slang ("Fitzgerald is so upfront"). This unexceptional chatter, however, is clearly going on in a feminist academic circle, where any lefty generalisation or overstatement can be assured of a chorus of nods. "People treat the animals they have in their power according to their expectation of their treatment by people who have power over them. (As, indeed, men do their wives.)"

Elsewhere she shrewdly observes that "the most cerebral people are most vulnerable to the glamour of a vitality perceived as an equality of appearance, rather than a way of life which cannot be known for itself." This seems to mean, as she might put it, that eggheads are suckers for the bright lights, but who can say? One can, though, be sure how she feels when she says that Margaret Thatcher is "a twopenny halfpenny demagogue of the kind known and feared throughout the Third World" — when, presumably, they weren't fearing such half-a-crown types as Idi Amin.

Carter also exhibits a woman's, a novelist's awareness that experience cannot always be pinned down or tidily explained. "Either trousers have become more formal," she muses, "or offices have become more informal. Something has changed, at any rate. I wonder what it means." The mysteries of Providence, Rhode Island, also elude her. "The city falls apart in my hands, the way the Sunday paper does; it slips open in five, six, seven sections, and none of them fit [sic] back together again. I can't get a grip on it." Carter has less difficulty though in Tokyo, where, in an atmosphere of "throbbing sensuality", she discovers that men are not very nice to nightclub hostesses, or read pornographic comics that are extremely unpleasant.

Like Carter herself, her admirers often don't have too tight a grip on their material. "Few novelists have written better about clothes than she does," says Morrison. Who, in his wide reading of literary fashion writers, does he have in mind? If, say, Henry James is allowed among the favoured few, who is on the long list of her inferiors? According to Veronica Horwell in the *Guardian*, "No current ego-journos would deflate themselves as Carter did — she never tried to project personal desirability in print, unless you count her shameless flaunting of full-frontal brains."

Showing off — of anterior lobes or anything else — is not so personally or impersonally desirable as Horwell seems to think, nor self-mockery so rare. She can't have read much current journalism if she's missed all those columnists who flaunt their big bottoms or incompetence in bed or inability to control their offspring. For all the efforts of Carter's fans to promote her as a queen of popular-culture criticism, she looks pretty hapless next to the many American practitioners — Norman Mailer, for instance, or Pauline Kael. Carter's adherents sound like those lovers of the British musical who are puzzled at claims for Ethel Merman's supremacy over that of Julia MacKenzie.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"I have not read your book. I do not intend to read your book. I do not know anybody who has and I have no interest in it whatsoever."

— Sir Tim "Flasher" Bell to his biographer Mark Hollingsworth

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ *AH, the scrupulousness of literary editors in these balmy late-summer days...*

Readers of the Times' elegant books pages might recently have chanced upon a lavish encomium of Rachel Cusk's new novel The Country Life. "Cusk's countryside is a highly-wrought comic creation," noted Helen Dunmore. "Like the novels of Evelyn Waugh or Stella Gibbons, The Country Life has a moral code, meticulously disguised by comedy: Cusk is a highly interesting, original writer and more unusually, she is a joy to read."

It can only be coincidence, of course, that Ms Cusk is a frequent ornament of the Times' books pages.

Meanwhile in the Guardian, paperback reviewer Nicholas Lezard was puzzling over the question of what to do at parties when people asked him to recommend a book. Happily Lezard's problems were solved at a stroke by a copy of Linda Grant's The Cast Iron Shore: "For here in this story about a half-Jewish Liverpudlian fashion-obsessed woman who becomes a communist in post-war America, is all the fat, intelligent novel you could want. Written so beautifully smoothly that tearing yourself away from it in order to eat or sleep is something of a wrench." Again, it can only be chance that Ms Grant just happens to pen a weekly column for, yup, the Guardian.

□ EDDIE BELL, the Dirty Digger's hatchet man at crisis-hit HarperCollins, has angered Britain's academics by applying his axe to Cobuild, the prestigious subsidiary run by HC and the University of Birmingham to carry out cutting-edge computer research into the English language.

"Now for Colin and Brenda on their 25th wedding anniversary, their song, Jimi Hendrix's 'Voodoo Chile'

Cobuild was founded to unite serious academic research with the world of commercial publishing. It has produced a wide range of state-of-the-art English language reference books and CD-Roms which are used all over the world to teach English as a foreign language. It also published in 1987 what is still a mega-bestseller: the *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary*.

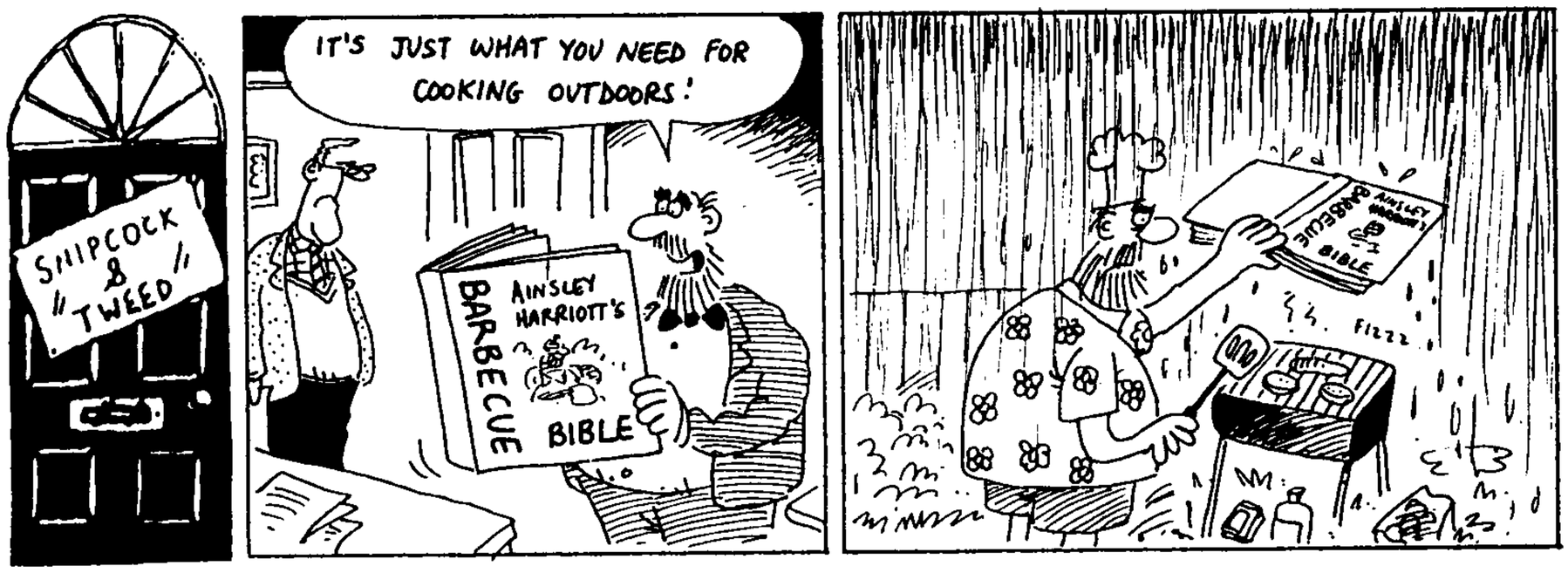
Faced with spiralling losses, Bell, who is executive chairman and publisher of HarperCollins, announced on 8 July that "to streamline its operation at the University of Birmingham" 14 of the 18 full-time staff at Cobuild would be made redundant with one month's notice.

Bell then told the 14 they could apply for *one* job at Cobuild that is at present unfilled. He also hinted that if they didn't kick up a fuss about being sacked, they might be taken on as freelances for future Cobuild projects.

Cobuild was established in 1980 as a joint project between Collins and the University of Birmingham under the leadership of Prof John Sinclair, the distinguished linguist who recently retired. Under Sinclair, Cobuild spearheaded a revolution in the study of the English language by gathering and collating a vast body of spoken and written English into Cobuild's *The Bank of English*, which is — at least for the moment — available on-line for researchers and students.

Sinclair's methods have since been adopted by most other educational publishers. Sue Blackwell, of the School of English at Birmingham University and linguist Wilhelm Meijs, formerly of the University of Amsterdam, are now urging fellow academics to protest strongly against Bell's sackings.

'Bookworm'



REMAINDERS OF THE DAY

LORD Archer of Weston-super-Mare has been hard selling his latest pisspoor novel on QVC, the home shopping cable TV channel.

Archer tells viewers they can buy signed copies of the *Fourth Estate* via an 0800 number, a snip at £16.99 plus £3.45 p&p. At WH Smith's Sloane Square branch, meanwhile, customers are also being offered signed copies of *Fourth Estate*... for just £1.

footnotes

THE BRIDGEWATER APPEAL

JUSTICES SEEN TO BE DONE

"THIS COURT," said Lord Justice Roch and his fellow judges in their judgment of the Carl Bridgewater murder case appeal, "is not concerned with the guilt or innocence of the appellants."

He conceded at once that this may sound odd to those who believe that the guilt or innocence of the accused is a little bit central to any system of criminal justice. But the lord justice went on to explain that what really mattered was the "integrity of the process". The Bridgewater Four were to be cleared because of a foul-up in that process — not because they were innocent of the newspaper boy murder.

Anyone who believes this fiction and concludes that senior judges are in the habit of releasing child murderers on to the streets just because of a flaw in the "integrity of the process" should compare Lord Justice Roch's judgment in this case with that of his two predecessors in the court of appeal, Lord Chief Justice Lane in 1981 and Lord Justice Russell in 1989. The only possible conclusion from such a comparison is that Lane and Russell plainly thought the appellants were guilty as hell, while Lord Justice Roch and his colleagues were not so sure.

Prosecution 0 Defence 6

The most striking difference is in the treatment of the witnesses against Jimmy Robinson. There were six main witnesses at the 1979 trial. Wendy Stagg, who identified Robinson as a man she saw in the street outside the farm a few minutes after Carl Bridgewater was shot, was singled out for special praise by the trial judge. She was described by Lord Lane as "most impressive". Not a word of her ridiculous testimony (she endowed the man she saw with a full head of hair while Robinson at the time had no hair at all) was doubted by Lord Justice Russell. By contrast Roch and Co didn't believe the man she saw had anything to do with the murder, and concluded: "The striking weakness in her evidence should have been drawn to the jury's attention and emphasised." Out went Stagg.

Mario Sabetta, who was also presented by the prosecution as a key identification witness against Robinson, was upheld in strong terms by Lane and Russell. Sabetta said he saw two men, one with the gun, outside the farm about three quarters of an hour before the murder — and one of them was Robinson. He also said he saw a young woman walking her dog on the same day. Whoops! A police message revealed for the first time in this appeal (and discovered, like all the other new evidence, not by the prosecution or the police but by the men's lawyer, Jim Nichol) proved that long before the trial the police had found this woman, a Mrs Oakley, who often walked her dog down that road. But Mrs Oakley was in Sheffield on the day of the murder. Her statement was not disclosed to the defence at the trial because it made nonsense of the Sabetta identification. Out went Sabetta.

WRONG: Russell LJ

WRONG: Lane LCJ

Helen Johnston, a barmaid, who said she had heard Robinson talking to his friend Pat Molloy about the murder, was commended by Lord Lane. Lord Justice Russell referred to the "reliability of her testimony". Whoops! A set of police messages, disclosed for this appeal, reveals another barmaid, Angela Marshall, who was behind the bar at the same time and despite two police interviews couldn't remember a word about the incriminating conversation. "As of today," say Roch and Co, "we accept that her (Helen Johnston's) credibility rating is arguably nil." Out went Johnston.

James Dundas-Ure, a pimp who got time off his sentence for alleging that Robinson had half-confessed to him in a pub, was not rejected by Lane or Russell. Roch and Co say: "This evidence does nothing to allay the various concerns and reservations which we have already expressed in this judgment about the safety of James Robinson's conviction." Out went Dundas-Ure.

A pathological lawyer

Two prison grasses who pretended Robinson had confessed to them, Peter Bryant and Mervyn Ritter, were upheld by the judges in the former appeals. "We could find nothing which would justify the rejection of the evidence of Bryant," said Lord Justice Russell. Compare that with Roch: "We have come to the conclusion that it would be inappropriate to attach any weight to his [Bryant's] evidence." Out went Bryant.

Ritter, who was described by experts at the Russell appeal as a pathological liar, was promoted by Lord Justice Russell into "a witness of truth". Roch and Co concluded: "No weight at all should be attached to Ritter's evidence." Out went Ritter. All six witnesses were dismissed, and there was no case left against Jimmy Robinson.

RIGHT: Ann Whelan, Michael Hickey's mother and Jimmy Robinson

Against Michael Hickey there never was a case. Jeremy Roberts QC, for the crown, opened his submission on Michael Hickey like this: "We agree that having regard to all the retractions and the fresh evidence, the evidence which survives is not sufficient to sustain his conviction." This was remarkable. Apart from the exposé of a specially nasty "verbal" alleged against Michael by a couple of Staffordshire police officers (who have been reported to the DPP), there was no fresh evidence or retractions in Michael's case which were not available to Mr Roberts when he vigorously argued the case against Michael in the 1988/89 appeal. The grim fact emerges that Michael Hickey was kept in prison from 1989 to 1997 on evidence which even his prosecutor admits was not sufficient to convict him.

Vinnocent!

No one reading the judgment could doubt that Robinson, Michael Hickey and Pat Molloy, who died in prison in 1981, had nothing to do with the murder of Carl Bridgewater. But then the precise judgment suddenly degenerates into slackness and imprecision. Many days at the appeal were spent on the alibi of the Hickey cousins, Michael and Vincent, who said clearly at their trial that on the afternoon of the murder they visited a garage in Northfield to buy a car. Mr Roberts and the prosecution conceded that the Hickeys did visit the garage that afternoon, but insisted that they could have gone straight there from the murder of the newspaper boy.

"We cannot," said Roch and Co, "conclude that the evidence as to the alibi establishes the truth of the alibi." This was extraordinary since a new statement, never before disclosed to the defence, established the Hickeys' alibi beyond reasonable doubt. Bernard Turner, who lived in the same house as Vincent Hickey, said he had seen Vincent coming home on the evening of the murder at around 5.45pm. Thus the prosecution scenario was this. The Hickeys left the scene of the murder at Yew Tree Farm, Staffs, at 4.45pm, drove to a pub in Selly Oak to drop off Pat Molloy (at least 35 minutes' drive), drove on from there to pick up Vincent's girlfriend's Morris car (another eight minutes) and on to the garage (four minutes).

Vincent then test-drove a car he wanted to buy. The garage proprietor then test-drove the Morris. Documents were drawn up and a receipt given. All this was quite impossible in the time before Vincent was seen arriving home. The Hickeys' story was clearly vindicated. But instead of going through the timings carefully and arriving at a clear conclusion, the judges fudged the issue with this awful double-negative: "The position is that the independent evidence did not establish that the Hickeys could not have been at the garage at a time inconsistent with their being at Yew Tree Farm at the time of the murder."

Like the full evidence of Linda Galvin and her daughter Stephanie (see Linda La Plant, *Eye* 924), Bernard Turner's statement was not disclosed because it helped to prove the Hickeys' alibi. Why were the judges, so

forthright elsewhere, so shy to condemn this? The answer comes much later in the judgment with their preposterous conclusion against Vincent Hickey: "There remains sufficient evidence on which a reasonable jury properly directed could convict." This smear would have been impossible if Vincent had an alibi.

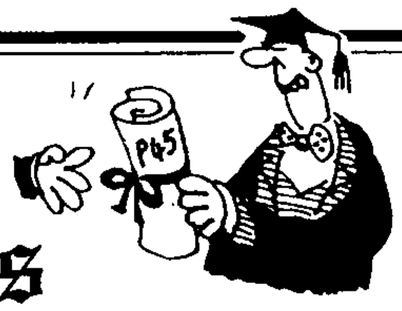
The only so-called "evidence" against Vincent was the cat-and-mouse game he played with police officers in which he pretended to know about the Bridgewater murder to get bail on another robbery. These "admissions" depended entirely for their credibility on the participation in the murder of Robinson and Molloy. From the moment the case against these four men was first put together 18 years ago, the prosecution insisted that the four had acted together; that together they had gone to the farm and robbed it; and were there together when the newspaper boy was shot.

The sudden and wholly unsupported suggestion that Vincent Hickey may have acted on his own is beyond belief. Why then did the judges float it? The answer is damage limitation. The mere suggestion that one of the men might have been guilty opens a chink in the wall of injustice through which many of those responsible can crawl. It detracts from the role in this shocking story of the crown prosecutors, most notably Igor Judge, now Lord Justice Judge, whose reluctance to disclose material and whose unfair cross-examination is criticised, sometimes sharply, 11 times in the Roch judgment.

PROVED INNOCENT: Vincent Hickey

Though the judges expressed their regret at the miscarriage of justice, Jeremy Roberts QC and his colleague William Coker QC, who have been in charge of this prosecution for at least half the men's wrongful imprisonment, offered not a single word of apology. If the word gets out that the entirely innocent Vincent Hickey might have been guilty, who will investigate too closely the miserable performance of the great panjandrums of the legal system responsible for this injustice — Lord Chief Justice Lane, Lord Chief Justice Taylor, Lord Justice Goff, Lord Justice Russell, Lord Justice Judge, Mr Justice Leonard, Mr Justice Potts, Mr Justice Drake and all the rest of them. The Great Bench Fraternity has contrived once more to distance itself from injustice — at least until the next one.

High Principals



BLUNKETT FUNKS IT

■ **ALMOST everyone in the area was outraged last year when the huge Wirral Metropolitan College announced the closure of its popular site at Withens Lane, and with it the end of 100 years of further education at Wallasey. A petition against the closure was signed by 20,000 people, including the local Labour MP Angela Eagle.**

The general election held out some hope to campaigners that the site could be saved. At an election meeting on 4 April, Eagle announced to sustained cheers that she had secured a promise from David Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman, that a new Labour government would review the closure decision.

On the day after the election, David Blunkett became secretary of state for education, and Angela Eagle a junior minister for the environment. She wrote to Blunkett reminding him of his Wallasey promise and asking for urgent action. Two months later, on 10 July, Blunkett wrote to say that his officials had "discussed this case further" and discovered that the secretary of state had no power to interfere with the college board unless the board was behaving unlawfully or unreasonably. In this case, he went on, the closure was perfectly reasonable and there was nothing he could do about it.

A few days later David Blunkett announced the names of the members of his new task force for getting young people off welfare and into work. One name which was greeted with some disbelief in Wallasey was that of Jenny Shackleton, principal of, er, Wirral Metropolitan College and the moving force behind the Wallasey site closure. To complete the picture, one of the two "pilot areas" for Blunkett's welfare-to-work initiative is the Wirral.

PROMOTED: Jenny Shackleton

PS: An irritating opponent of the Wallasey closure was Mike Sandbach, the representative on the Wirral Met college board from the local trade unions. Sandbach's wife Lil was a teacher at the college who faced charges of claiming pay for hours she did not work. Last October, Mike Sandbach was told that because his wife was in dispute with the college, he had a conflict of interest as a board member. He was sacked. Lil Sandbach's dispute duly went to Birkenhead county court in April. The college case was thrown out in its entirety.

SUMMERS ARE A COMIN' IN

■ **IN PROMPT response to some *Eye* questions about recent appointments at Huntingdonshire Regional College, the principal, Richard Summers, sent us this message:**

1. Miss Hannah Summers [his daughter] is one of a number of children of staff employed on short term temporary contracts at student rates. She is handling telephoned course inquiries and course bookings, and setting up registers for teaching staff.

2. Mrs Susan Summers [his wife] is community education manager at the college.

3. Neither of these appointments was made by me. I excluded myself entirely in order to ensure no conflict of interest. It may interest you to know that the totally independent FEFC Inspectorate has judged community education to be one of the college's outstanding strengths.

You will find a doubtless boring lack of sleaze-bags in this rather puritanical neck of "the sticks".

Switch off the Lightman

■ **AS *EYE* readers know (see SNOUTS IN THE PENSION TROUGH, *Eye* 905), Dr Julian Farrand, the pensions ombudsman, is detested by important people in the pensions industry because he insists that the purpose of pension funds is to pay pensions and not to enrich employers.**

In his annual report just published, Dr Farrand defends himself against lawyers and judges who have attacked him. He singles out "one particular prominent pensions lawyer", whom the *Eye* can name as Mr Robin Ellison, now of the big city firm Eversheds.

Ellison has been relentlessly attacking the ombudsman in a series of learned articles in the specialist pensions press. His view is that the ombudsman is not capable of deciding complicated pension matters which are best left to City lawyers – like, er, Mr Ellison.

It was Ellison advised the big food combine Hillsdown Holdings that it could take the surplus of the pension fund of a subsidiary it had swallowed called FMC. Dr Farrand completely disagreed. He held that the FMC surplus was the property of the pensioners and not the company. Hillsdown appealed. Following Mr Ellison's advice, Hillsdown's barrister told the appeal court that the company was perfectly entitled to take the surplus even though FMC's trust deed did not permit it. Mr Justice Knox described this as "not good advice" and found for the ombudsman.

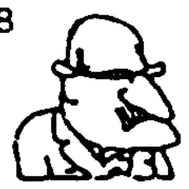
VINDICATED: Dr Farrand

Another case which annoys Dr Farrand concerned the architects firm, Seiferts. Erdogan Kural, who worked for Seiferts, opted for early retirement and was given figures for his pension. Just before he retired his pension was suddenly and substantially reduced on the grounds that the firm was in financial difficulty. Dr Farrand upheld a complaint against the firm and against the trustees and ordered them to pay the complainant what he had been promised.

Though this decision was simple and unexceptional, Seiferts appealed. Three barristers for Seiferts and the trustees appeared in front of Mr Justice Lightman. The ombudsman was not represented. The judge denounced the ombudsman for mistakes in law and maladministration and awarded costs against him. Mr Kural appealed against this judgment and Dr Farrand appealed against the order for costs. On 31 July, the appeal court unanimously overturned Lightman's judgment. Mr Kural gets his money.The costs order against the ombudsman was overturned too.

Eye readers will remember Mr Gavin Lightman, who idolised his client Arthur Scargill up to and through the miners' strike of 1984 and 1985. When the strike was over, and the miners beaten, Lightman denounced Scargill in a report commissioned by the miners' union, and then submitted his report for publication without the agreement of the union which commissioned it. The union sued Lightman for breach of copyright. The book was withdrawn and Lightman was obliged to pay substantial compensation.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183



In the City

CONTRARY to what policyholders, some MPs and the *Sunset Times* may want to believe, it seems increasingly unlikely that any pension company director will find themselves in court facing criminal charges as a result of the mis-selling scandal.

The reason is very simple: the financial services act, under which any such prosecution would be mounted, contains a "get-out-of-jail" card for any guilty suit. Company directors have to be proved to have known of the mis-selling and that it was deliberate— a test which experts see as impossible to meet.

Scotland Yard's fraud squad is currently investigating several allegations of pensions mis-selling out of the estimated 1.5 million cases which have been identified. However, there is little confidence that any of these will result in a criminal prosecution of the directors of the companies involved. This pessimism is understood to be shared by the Serious Farce Office (SFO), the Securities & Investments Board (SIB) and, not surprisingly, the Crown Non-Prosecution Service (CPS). However, no one is eager to stand up and say as much — for political reasons with the Labour government keen to be seen to be "naming and shaming" the guilty.

That personal pensions were knowingly mis-sold to members of occupational pension schemes is undoubted. Few if any members of occupational schemes, such as teachers, nurses or miners, would ever have been any better off with a private pension. So when the flood of transfers started, those in the pension departments of the high street banks and leading insurance companies — themselves probably in generous occupational schemes — had to know that most if not all those switching into personal pensions were making a bad decision. But nobody clearly wanted to either restrain the commission hungry salesmen or forego the billions flooding into company coffers, plus the accompanying profitable frontended loaded charges.

However, the view of those close to the Yard investigation is that this was never going to be enough to mount a successful prosecution of the likes of "new" Labour's new best friend Sir Peter Davis, chairman of the Prudential which tops the list of mis-sellers with 50,000 of the 570,000 priority cases. It is no doubt entirely coincidental that to date Prudential has not been singled out for the "name and shame" treatment by treasury minister Helen Liddell — herself a former employee of that other great pension protector, Cap'n Bob Maxwell — since Davis was appointed to head the government's welfare-to-work taskforce.

With Labour having pledged to act quickly and tough, it suited the government to encourage the belief that the handcuffs would soon be on guilty suits. Nothing so concentrates the executive mind as the thought of a wake-up call from the inspector. So that threat could encourage banks and insurance companies to expedite clearing up the disgraceful backlog of priority cases before the 1998 deadline.

The *Sunset Times* was a keen supporter of the idea as part of its justified "justice for pension victims" campaign. "Yard closes in on pensions bosses", it confidently reported on 1 June, declaring: "The first cases should reach the courts by the end of the year." The basis for this confidence was that section 47 of the FSA makes mis-selling an offence. The act was also said to make directors responsible for their salesmen. But only up to a point. For section 47 also says it is a defence to say that a defendant "reasonably believed" his actions would not create a "false or misleading impression".

The requirement to prove beyond a reasonable doubt directors acted without reasonable belief in specific individual cases was spotted at an early stage as a loophole through which even the directors of the most guilty companies were likely to escape. It is now seen as a flaw in the law which is likely to make prosecutions either unlikely or certain to fail in the view of experienced investigators.

Just how difficult it is to hold directors responsible for even fatal mistakes by their employees has been repeatedly proved in ill-fated prosecutions or attempted prosecutions after industrial accidents or disasters.

Far better and more effective is likely to be for SIB and the Personal Investment Authority to punish those responsible by fines or bans on new business. A result by that route is seen as faster, cheaper and more certain than via the courts. Liddell herself seems suddenly to be moving that way according to none other than the *Sunset Times* in its latest (20 July) campaign report.

CLEARLY one-time MI6 "asset" and Tory funder Mohammad Jamshid Hashemi is becoming understandably confused as a result of the pressure created by his abandonment in the face of fraud charges brought by the SFO over a $72m Iranian deal.

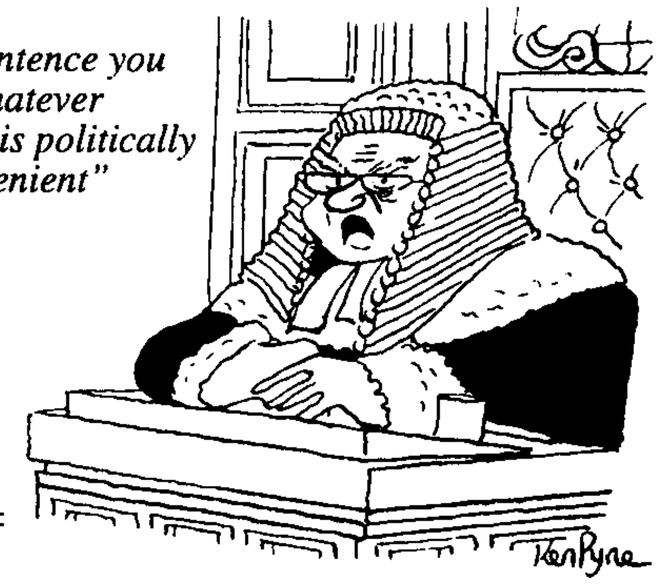
Desperate for medical treatment in the United States, Hashemi, a US citizen, recently travelled to Dublin intending to catch a flight to the land of the free. His health problems solved, Hashemi had every intention of returning to fight the charges against him. Sadly his journey was interrupted when he was reminded that he had brought the wrong passport. Once this oversight was drawn to his attention, Hashemi gladly returned to London and medical treatment at a leading private hospital.

Hashemi's trial next year is unlikely to be welcomed by his former friends in MI6 who used him, as did the CIA, as a contact with Iran. Indeed, so concerned were the spooks, even before Hashemi himself began cranking up the volume about his life and times in the intelligence wilderness of mirrors, that they made their presence felt.

Soon after Hashemi was arrested in July last year, MI6 officials are said to have contacted the then attorney-general Sir Nicholas Lyell who is responsible for the SFO. "Some concern was expressed," according to a source with knowledge of the case. At least one more contact was later made by the spooks despite being keen to distance themselves from Hashemi.

All of which will encourage understandable claims by Hashemi, who denies any allegation of fraud, that he is a victim of ingrates and anyway far too ill to stand trial.

"I sentence you to whatever term is politically convenient"



HOW good to see the Liberal Democrats nominating former Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corporation chairman Sir Michael Sandberg as a peer. After all, it is a long long time ago that the Sandberg-led HKSBC was embarrassed by its lending to Carrian conman George Tan — now in jail. And the man responsible for the bad loans was Sandberg's protégé Ewan Launder — yet to tell his side of the story over claims that he received £4.5m in bribes for loans. Also ancient history is that other convicted conman, Australian Alan Bond, to whom the bank opened its loan book on many occasions. The former chairman continued the connection with Bond after he left the bank, though naturally before Bond was exposed for the fraudster he was. Now the House of Lords can look forward to receiving the benefit of Sandberg's vast banking knowledge.

ONE of the more gushing obituaries to the unlamented Sir Jams Goldsmith came from none other than "Changi Jim" Slater. "The financier supreme with a zest for life," introduced Slater's paean of praise in the *Mail on Sunday* (27 July). But then Slater had a lot to be thankful to Goldsmith for — not that *Mail on Sunday* readers would have realised.

Goldsmith was probably crucial in ensuring Slater never faced a Department of Timidity & Inaction investigation or worse over the near collapse of his Slater Walker empire in 1975. At the time of the crisis Goldsmith was not only probably the largest shareholder in Slater Walker Securities — as the result of a failed plan for a tripartite alliance with Goldsmith's Generale Occidentale and Renault — but was into the Slater Walker bank for big numbers. The demise of Slater Walker could well have precipitated the demise of Goldsmith. But help was at hand. Goldsmith was appointed by the Bank of England to replace his former friend, backer and business partner as chairman of Slater Walker!

Just how much the Bank of England knew about the Slater connection was never clear. But in the rush to prevent a crash which would have destabilised the City, the Bank did not do much homework. Also unclear was whether Slater himself suggested Goldsmith as his successor.

Needless to say Goldsmith never faced any problems as a result of the internal investigations carried out into Slater Walker or the loans by its bank which was taken over by the Bank of England. Goldsmith went on to a knighthood and Mexico, while his old friend became a celebrated share tipster.

'Slicker'

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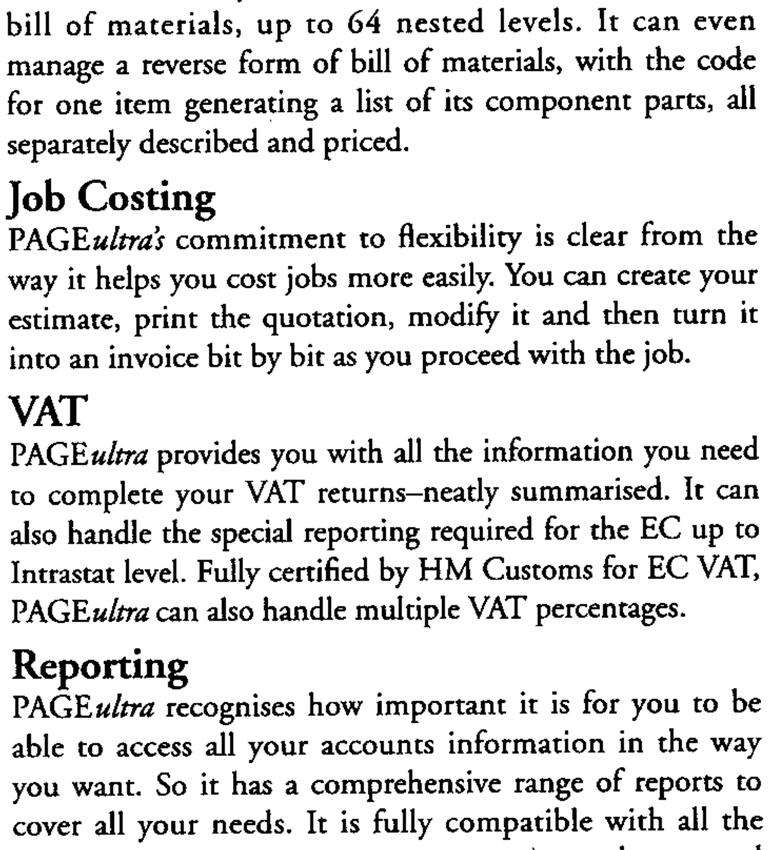

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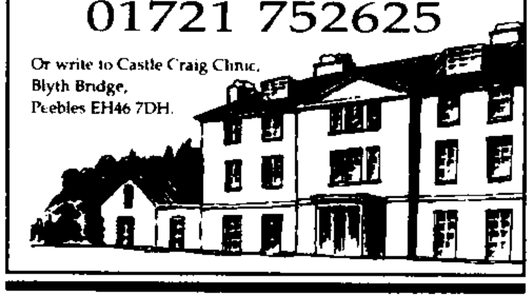

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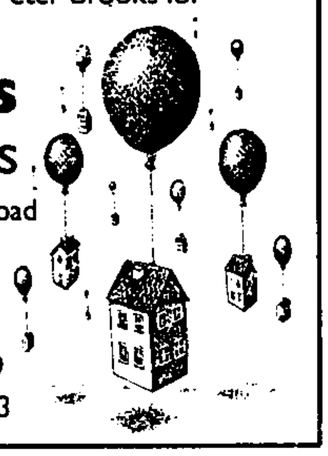

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NEW LIFE WANTED, £100,000 needed. Barclays 20-31-52 00534277. Thankyou. Box 3730.

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LOTTERY FUNDED FILM seeks extra finance for completion. Copy available for viewing. Tel/Fax: 0171 627 1857.

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MARRIED MALE, 50, seeks home counties lady for regular caring daytime relationship. Box 3128.

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FLYING INSTRUCTOR seeks affair with privately educated girl. Box 0930.

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ATTACHED BUSINESS EXECUTIVE male, 44, 6'3" — wants to meet attractive, leggy lady soulmate, 30-40 for discreet fun/romance, Thames Valley area. I will adore and provide the TLC. Box 1630.

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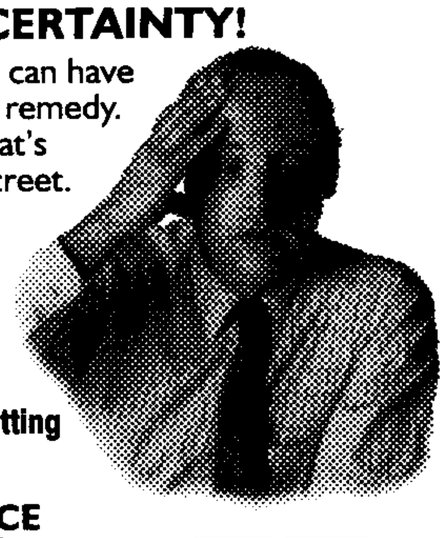

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Mr ❒ Mrs ❒ Miss ❒ Ms ❒

Surname: _____

First Name: _____

Address: _____

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Post Code _____

I am seriously interested in meeting someone through Dateline.

Marital Status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒ Widowed ❒ Separated ❒

Age: Height:

Occupation:

Religion:

Build: Slight ❒ Medium ❒ Large ❒

Attractiveness: Very attractive ❒ Attractive ❒ Average ❒

2. Education

Private / Public ❒ Grammar ❒
Comprehensive ❒ Sec. Modern ❒

O Levels / GCSE's ❒ A levels ❒
Further Education ❒
University / Professional Equivalent ❒
Technical Qualification ❒

3. Your Personality

(tick which traits closely describe you)

❒ Affectionate ❒ Fashionable
❒ Serious ❒ Practical
❒ Considerate ❒ Conventional
❒ Shy ❒ Reliable
❒ Romantic ❒ Adventurous

4. Your Attitudes

(tick for yes, cross for no or leave blank)

❒ Do you involve yourself with community activities?
❒ Are you looking for one special relationship?
❒ Does your work make it difficult to meet new people?
❒ Do you want to extend your social life as well as finding a special relationship?
❒ Do you devote a lot of time to your social life?

5. Your interests

(sections 5. and 6. Please tick for a like, cross for dislike or leave blank for no preference.)

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❒ Pubs ❒ Classical music
❒ Sports/Keep fit ❒ Theatre/Arts
❒ Politics/History ❒ Watching TV
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❒ Travelling ❒ Astrology
❒ Science/Tech ❒ Children
❒ Cinema ❒ Homemaking
❒ Pets/Animals ❒ Gardening
❒ Pop music ❒ Countryside

6. Details of your ideal partner

Minimum age: Maximum age:

Height: min. max. Don't mind ❒

Marital status:

Single ❒ Divorced ❒
Widowed ❒ Separated ❒
Don't mind ❒

Build: Slight ❒ Medium ❒ Large ❒

Attractiveness: Very attractive ❒ Attractive ❒ Average ❒

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Dateline

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